Wm M. Krebs.

LIBRARY
Theological Seminary,

BX 5255 .L4 1828 v.2
Leighton, Robert, 1611-1684.
The whole works of Robert
Leighton, archbishop of

The John M. Krebs Donation.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/wholeworksofrobe02leig

THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

ROBERT LEIGHTON, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

THE REV. JOHN NORMAN PEARSON, M.A.,

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE
MOST NOBLE THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY.

Οὕτω θειῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων θείων καὶ εὐδαιμόνων βίος, ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῇδε, βίος ἀνήδονος τῶν τῇδε, φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον.—PLOTINI ENNEAD. 6. L. c. xi. 9.

A NEW EDITION, IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JAMES DUNCAN, PATERNOSTER ROW:
JOHN HATCHARD AND SON; L. B. SEELEY AND SON; AND HOWELL
AND STEWART; LONDON: PARKER, OXFORD: AND
J. AND J. J. DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE.

MDCCCXXVIII.

LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES,
Stamford Street.

CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LECTURES ON THE FIRST NINE CHAPTERS OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

Chap.	Ver.		Page
I.	1.	The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham	1
II.	1.	Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem	5
III.	1.	In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea	11
IV.	1.	Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil	18
V.	12.	And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was sat, his disciples came unto him	24
VI.	19.	Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth	28
VII.	1-5.	Judge not, that ye be not judged	32
VIII.	1.	When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him	36
IX	1.	And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city	45

SERMONS.

1.	The Nature and Properties of Heavenly Wisdom	53
2.	The Patient and Docile Sufferer	61
3.	The Divine Glory of Zion	69
4.	Christ the Light and Lustre of the Church	76
5.	Christ the Light and Lustre of the Church	84
6.	Hope amidst Billows	93
7.	Generous Grief	103
8.	The name of Jesus fragrant	112
9.	The Sinner a Rebel against God	122
10.	The true Christian the best Subject	128
11.	Grapes from Thorns	138
12.	The Believer a Hero	146

SERM. PAGE
13. The Parable of the Sower 154
14. The Promises an Encouragement to Holiness 160
15. Divine Grace and Holy Obedience. 164
16. The Christian Triumph 171
17. The Christian Triumph 175
18. The Goodness of God, and the wickedness of Man . . . 180
19. Time to awake 188
20. The Observation of Providence 195
21. Imperfection and Perfection 202
22. The Confidence of Faith 209
23. A Summary of Spiritual Privileges 216
24. The Folly of Man and the Teaching of God 226
25. Mercy despised and the Contempt punished 233
26. The Confession and Prayer of Faith 242
27. Calamities to be cautiously interpreted 249
28. Present Duty 255
29. Love the Fulfilling of the Law 258
30. The Law written upon the Heart 262
31. God's End and Design in Affliction 266
32. Suitable Exercise in Affliction 275

A Sermon preached to the Clergy 283

EXPOSITIONS.

An Exposition of the Creed 295
An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer 318
An Exposition of the Ten Commandments 362
A Short Catechism 404

THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.

Preface. 407
LECT.
1. The Introduction 411
2. Of Happiness, its Name and Nature, and the Desire of it implanted in the Human Heart 415
3. Of the Happiness of Man, and that it is really to be found . . 417
4. In which it is proved that Human Felicity cannot be found either in the Earth or earthly Things. 420
5. Of the Immortality of the Soul 425
6. Of the Happiness of the Life to come 430
7. Of the Being of God 434
8. Of the Worship of God, Providence, and the Law given to Man 441
9. Of the Pleasure and Utility of Religion 445

LECT. PAGE

10. Of the Decrees of God 448
11. Of the Creation of the World 451
12. Of the Creation of Man 457
13. Of Providence 462
14. Of Christ the Saviour 468
15. Of Regeneration 471
16. Of Regeneration 478
17. Of true Felicity and eternal Punishment 483
18. Of the Christian Religion, and that it is the true Way to Happiness 487
19. That Holiness is the only Happiness on this Earth . . . 491
20. Of our Happiness, particularly that it lies in God, who alone can direct us to the true Way of attaining to it; that this way he has discovered in the Sacred Scriptures, the divine authority whereof is asserted and illustrated 495
21. Of the Divine Attributes 502
22. How to regulate Life, according to the rules of Religion . . 505
23. Of Purity of Life 508
24. Before the Communion 511

An Exhortation to the Students upon their return to the University after the Vacation , ... 516

EXHORTATIONS TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Exhortation I. 520
„ II. 523
„ III. 526
„ IV. 529
„ V. 531
„ VI. 534
„ VII. 536
„ VIII. 540

Valedictory Oration 543
A Modest Defence of Moderate Episcopacy, &c. 546
A Fragment on Ezra ix: 550
Charges to the Clergy of the Diocesan Synod of Dunblane . . 552
Rules and Instructions for a Holy Life 563

LECTURES*

ON THE

FIRST NINE CHAPTERS

OF

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

As the bounty of God appears in the furniture and comforts of our natural life, in that he hath not only provided for simple necessity, but enriched it with plentiful variety; thus He hath done likewise towards the spiritual life in the provision of the Holy Scriptures, having in them so rich diversity of the kind of writings, prophecies and histories, poesies and epistles, and of the kind, and expressly on the same subject, four books written by the hands of four several men, but all led by the hand of the same Spirit, and all of them so harmoniously according together, as makes up one song; the four with a delightful variety of notes, but no mistuning, or jarring difference: those that seem to be so, being duly considered, do not only well agree, but there is still some instructive advantage in the diversity; each recording something, some of them divers things that are not in the other; and what one hath more briefly, is more enlarged in some other: they are not so different as to be discordant, nor so the same as to be superfluous. Their order in the time of their writing, is, with good reason, conceived to be the same with that of their placing as we have them. This of St. Matthew was written first, and very likely in Hebrew, as more particularly for the use of his own nation, though in His purpose who set him on to work (as all the other scriptures) intended for the good of the Church in all succeeding ages. And he begins with the great mysterious point on which hangs our happiness, that which is our grand comfort, as St. Austin speaks, *the manhood of God*. The chapter hath these two, *his genealogy*, and *his nativity*, each particularly intituled; for the first words are the inscription, not of the whole book, nor of the

* First printed from the original MSS. in Dr. Jerment's edition of the Works, published in 1808, of which this is a corrected reprint.

whole chapter, but only of the first part of it. *The book*, that is (as the Hebrew word signifies,) the *roll*, or *list* of the *generation*, that is, the descent of *Jesus Christ*.

The account by ascending, as St. Luke does, or by descending, as this Evangelist, is altogether indifferent; neither need we, with the ancients, seek subtle and mysterious reasons of it, which are too airy to have either certain truth, or profitable use in them. The reckoning of the one only down from Abraham, and the other up to Adam, may have some more solid reason; the one having regard to the particular promise made to Abraham, and the other to the general interest of mankind, and that according to the promise made to our first parents in the garden. And this beginning in Abraham here, relishes somewhat of that we spake, of penning this gospel in Hebrew, with particular respect to the Jews for informing them first: as, indeed, the gospel was first to be preached to them, so might they have somewhat of the same privilege in the writing of it, He of whom it treats being born among them, and of them. And before entering to branch the lineage, the Evangelist particularly mentions David and Abraham, because of the particular promises made to them of the Messiah to come of their seed.

The great diversity of the names from David to Joseph, (of them all, indeed, save two,) has drawn several persons to take the one for the line of Joseph, the other for the line of Mary. But the diversity of names ariseth not so much from the custom of that nation, of one person having divers names, (which commonly is answered in this,) though somewhat of that may be in it; but it is much rather from that, it seems, St. Matthew does deduce the legal succession in government (by Solomon), St. Luke the natural in birth (by Nathan.) St. Matthew, to make up the number of his three fourteens, even omits some immediate parents, which alters nothing at all of the true deduction, and nephews are frequently called, and truly are, the sons of their grandfathers, though not immediate. Now, though it is possible that it might be otherwise, yet, the Evangelists take it as a thing then manifest and known when they wrote, that Joseph, according to the appointment and ordinary practice of his nation, did marry within his tribe and family. So that *his* extraction, who was but the supposed and nominal father, doth give account of Mary the real mother of Jesus Christ. Other scruples, though it may be to some needful to clear them, yet I name not, as being useless to acquaint those with who find them not. And some there be altogether needless and curious, which may pass among the vain unprofitable questions of genealogists that the Apostle advises to avoid.

Ver. 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child by the Holy Ghost.

St. Luke is more large in the history of the conception, but (which the rest have not) this Evangelist acquaints us with Joseph's behaviour in the business. We have, 1st. His first doubtful thoughts within himself; 2nd. His right information, and directions from God; 3d. His answerable acquiescence and obedience.

Perceiving Mary, who was espoused to him, to be with child before they came together, and not knowing how this came to pass, it would certainly perplex him much; yet goes he not in a sudden passion, or rage of jealousy, to take the extremest course, but *being a just man*, that is, not strict and severe, as taking justice in a strict sense, for so it would seem contrary to the present intendment;—yet, some have taken it so, *though he was a just man*;—but it is indeed rendered as the cause of his purpose mitigating of the law's rigour, and so, *just* is here a *good man*, a man of a moderate, mild spirit, averse from rigours, as good men usually are. And as his own temper, so, no doubt, Mary's carriage, did incline him to this way; observing her modesty and piety, which undoubtedly was singular, and would appear in her whole deportment; but further than that spake for her, it doth not appear that she spake all this while anything for herself: she offered not to declare the admirable way of her conception, which would have seemed feigned and incredible from her mouth, but quietly refers the matter to Him who had done it. Thus silent innocency rests satisfied in itself, where it may be inconvenient or fruitless to plead for itself, and loses nothing by doing so, for it is always in due season vindicated and cleared by a better hand. And thus it was here: she is silent, and God speaks for her.

Verse 20.—*While he thought on these things*, &c.] The whole matter is opened to him by the angel of God in a dream. This blessed child is owned by his glorious Father; the conception declared to be pure and supernatural by the Holy Ghost; his birth and name, and the reasons of it, are foretold; and upon these, Joseph is ascertained, not only of the spotless innocency, but of the matchless dignity, of his espoused Mary in this conception, and the true quality of her Divine Son, and so is furnished with sufficient ground of receiving her as his wife, which accordingly he forthwith did.

The last words of the chapter are added for the future clearness concerning the purity of his birth. But denying for the time before, which was to the present purpose, affirms nothing at all for the time after, as is evident by abundant instances of this manner of speech, where *until* goes no further than the named term any way, yea, does rather import the perpetuity of what it speaks; as Gen. xxviii. 15, *Until I have done that*, &c., and Is. xxii. 14, *Till ye die*,—which yet hath not been alleged, for anything I know, for a purgatory after death.

Ver. 22.—In the narration, the Apostle inserts (as is his custom) the parallel of the thing with a prophecy foretelling all this, of the accommodating of which I will not now insist. It is evident that it looks beyond anything that those times, or that any time, before this fulness of time, did afford. And this singular Virgin's conception was altogether agreeable to the singular person so conceived and born, both as to the purity of his human, and the dignity of his Divine, nature; that he might be known to be not only a holy, sinless man, but more than a simple man, God-man, *God with us*, as his name is.

Observation. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.* Many great volumes of history have been written of states and kingdoms of the earth, and lives of particular famous men, and the reading of them may delight and inform the mind; but what are they all, how empty

and comfortless stuff in respect of this history! *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.* This is the gospel, the alone good tidings to all nations and all ages; still fresh, and equally good news from one generation to another. Had not the Virgin borne this Son, we must say all of us, Good for us we had not been born.

Now, that so many ages were run by, before His coming, His will who chose that point of time, is sufficient reason. But, 1st, We may perceive by this, that the faith of the Church and people of God was exercised in the expectance of this promised seed, in whom all the nations should be blessed.

2dly. And the esteem of this rich gift raised (and well did he deserve to be) the desire and hope of the nations. Thus the Lord hath been pleased in other great favours, to use this way to reveal them in the promise long time before the performance: so, a son to Abraham, and the deliverance from Egypt, and that other from Babylon long before the captivity.

3dly. He was equally from the beginning, in his Father's view, for the interest of believers, in all those preceding ages, as if he had already lived and died and rose again, *A Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; for He sees through all generations and successions of times, and all things in them are always alike present to His eye. But in the mean time, while the Church was held in prefiguring shadows, this was their grand desire, that he might appear in the flesh; still looking and waiting when the day should break, and the shadows flee away. And thus in the Song of Solomon may we take that wish, (Ch. viii. ver. 1,) *Oh! that thou wast as my brother!* And though the time seemed long, yet *the vision was for the set time*, and then it spake, and lied not; and he was coming forward in the succession of time, *hastening as a roe on the mountains*, skipping from one age, from one hill to another: as here we have it, *Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob*, &c. And this is now the great wish of his spouse, the Church, and of each particular soul espoused to him, that he would come again as he hath promised; and he will do so. What a sweet echo there, (Rev. xxii. 17,) of *Come!* The Spirit says *Come*, and the Bride says *Come*; and He says, (ver. 20,) *Behold I come quickly*; and they resound again, *Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

Ver. 21. *But thou shalt call his name Jesus.*] That is the name that refreshes the fainting spirits of humbled sinners, that the sweet-smelling balm, that the ointment poured out, that draws the virgins to love him; sweet in the mouth and in the ear, and life in the heart. *A Saviour, for he shall save his people from their sins.* The Jews were his people once in a particular way; but all Jews and Gentiles that run unto his name as their refuge, are his people, and he hath engaged himself to be their Saviour, whatsoever kind of people they be, and whatsoever kind of guiltiness of sins they bring with them. And for that reason, as is observed, are named in this his genealogy, persons grossly stained, and the woman too, (ver. 3.) is specified, all under the same blot; and one a stranger, not of the seed of the Jews; signifying him to be a Saviour of all nations, and even of the vilest sinners. But we know not his riches and our own poverty; therefore we run not to him. We perceive not that we are lost and perishing; therefore a

Saviour is a word of little relish. Oh, were we convinced of the huge mass of guilt that lies upon us, and the wrath that for it hangs over us, ready to fall on us and sink us, this would be our continual thought, till we were resolved in it, Is this Saviour mine? And to the end we might find him so, we should tread upon all that lies in our way to run to him.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

2. Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

THE blessed Son now born, hath for part of his name, in the prophet foretelling, or rather telling his birth, (Isa. ix. 6,) *Wonderful*. He is so in his birth; that we have seen in the former chapter. He is so in his life and death, particularly in that part of his life which is ordinarily scarce at all remarkable, his infancy. The history of that we have in this chapter. So, as in that place of the prophet, *wonderful* is the beginning of his name, he is *wonderful* in the beginning of his life.

That wonder that goes along throughout all his life and death, is in the passages here recorded, very legible, a strong contemperature of majesty and meanness; yea, these two, so far distant in notion, yet meet in him, the meanness of Man and the majesty of God. So obscurely born and so poorly lodged, yet, that birth marked, and that lodging pointed out, by a star that seems to have no other work nor motion, but to tell of him, and lead to him; and by it wise men are led from far, to offer rich presents to a poor babe, and to do homage to him as a king, and to worship him!

Then, afterwards, he is put to flee for his life in his swaddling clothes. He who came to give life to dead man, is in hazard of a cruel death at the entry of his life, and escapes it by the obscure and hasty flight of his parents with him; yet, even in that flight there is a track of majesty, that they flee, stay, and return with him, all upon Divine warnings. Thus was this *Sun of Righteousness* veiled and clouded in human flesh, and a low kind of human life, and yet some rays of Deity are still breaking through and telling, *Here dwells the Godhead bodily*.

In this chapter, these two things of him are remarkable. First, He is marvellously witnessed and worshipped. Secondly, persecuted and preserved.

He is witnessed, 1st, By a star stirring up strangers from far, to seek him, and leading them to find him.

2dly, By those strangers coming and declaring this to be their errand, and inquiring after the place of his birth.

3dly, By the chief priests and scribes, from a clear prophecy, resolving them.

Of these, and other like points in the following history, what ques-

tions are moved more curious than useful, I shall either pass wholly in silence, or only name them to pass them, to put them out of our way, that they may not stop us in what may be useful. And textual difficulties that call for clearing, I shall endeavour to open with as much briefness as may well consist with clearness, and to serve for that end of clearing them. For this star, what shall we see the better into the end and person whom it served, by deciding, if we could, much less by debating what we cannot decide, whether it was a star or a comet? Called a star for its resemblance, as the Scripture often gives things the vulgar names, it seems to have been temporary, and made for this singular service only. However, it was a star that led to the sun.

After men have pleased themselves in the employ of all their reading and wit, to find what the Magi were, further than the text comes, they can assuredly inform us nothing. They were Magi, (wise men,) and of the east; but whether from Chaldea, or Persia, or Arabia, neither that name they bear, nor the presents they bring, can certainly conclude. It cannot be denied, that all these nations called their astrologers, and generally their philosophers, by that name; and they might bring the same presents from any of those, and from divers other eastern countries: nor is there any more evidence that they were Balaam's posterity, or of his school, though the prophecy of a star arising in Jacob, seems to suit somewhat well with this kind of notice given them by a star, and with their observing it, and following it. And truly, besides the uncertainty, the inutility of this may save us a labour; for what shall we be really the wiser, to know particularly what these wise men were, or whence they were? Sure I am, to make them three to fit their number to their presents, and to make kings of them, and give them names, and then to wrangle about their burial-place, is to play the fool about the wise men.

If you ask, how the star could speak this, that there was a great king born, and born in Judea, and speak it so as to persuade them to come and see? I conceive, all their skill in astronomy, and Balaam's prophecy of the star in Jacob, and the tradition of the Messiah, and his star, and Sibyl's prophesying of them, could not make the language of this star thus clear and intelligible to them. There was, no doubt, an extraordinary darting in of a higher light into their minds, clearer than that of the star, to make its meaning clear to them, and to draw them forth to this journey. The star appeared to them in the east, but it does not appear that it led them all the way, though commonly it be so conceived: on the contrary, after their setting forth, it seems not to have appeared to them till they came from Jerusalem, whither they went as likeliest either to find him they sought, or notice of him at least. And this likewise was by a Divine hand ordered, that both there they might give testimony of Christ, and likewise receive their further testimony of him and address to him, and be confirmed in their persuasion concerning him, and then seasonably the star appears to establish and lead them.

Ver. 3. *When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled.*] The wise men's question occasions Herod's fear, and that, the meeting of the priests and scribes to resolve it. They do it from the prophet Micah, ch. v. 2. The difference in the cited words is

really none, *Bethlehem Ephrata*, and *Bethlehem Judah*, being all one. And the prophet's words, read interrogatively, (as well they may,) are clearly the same thing with the Evangelist's narrative. However the least of all in itself, yet, it was not the least, but the greatest, by this great King's being born in it. And so, David bears the type of his Son and Lord, for he was of obscure birth in this same city.

Ver. 7—12. *Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men——sent them to Bethlehem.*] The wise men, thus answered and led, came to Bethlehem, and are now so confirmed of the royalty of this child, that they are not removed from that persuasion, nor at all staggered in it, by the sight of so much outward meanness as they found: a poor babe in a common inn; whether still in the manger or no, is not certain, so it may be; however, doubtless in a very low condition, far from royal grandeur, but yet so high in his own dignity and in their thoughts, that they fell down and worshipped, and offered their present, which they did not to Herod in all his pomp. This many ancient and modern are pleased to subtilize into mysteries, which, though I dare not confidently deny all, yet dare I aver nothing. He that brought them forth, directed them directly home, having no more business at Jerusalem. When they had found the King they came to seek, they left king Herod to seek his intelligence from others.

Ver. 13—23. But these were strange news to Herod—*a born king of the Jews.* The common fears that are of the ill genius of tyrants, and that are the fell revenge of the many fears they cause to so many others, are now raised, and rage within him upon this report. And for all his craft, and the growth of it for cruelties upon long practice, yet is he, as it were, so thunderstruck with this fear, that he cannot resolve on any sure way for this end, but inquires the age of the child, and, it seems, defers a good time, and smothers the intended massacre, (for that answers best the doubt about the age of two years,) and then sends and kills all the children of or under that age: that was the sacrifice which in his inquiry he meant to offer, instead of worshipping the child born. His Royal Father could have preserved him otherways than by the care and flight of his supposed father with him; but thus He pleased, even in this, to carry on His Divine Son under the covert of such human and humble ways of preservation, to make him in all things like us, (sin excepted,) and to sweeten those things to us, when we are called to be like him in them, in being persecuted, and by persecution forced to flee.

That text, ver. 15, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, suits most fitly, the words having (as other such adapted places) their prophetical aspect to Jesus Christ, without any prejudice of their first proper sense, in persons or things typifying him. Israel is called the Lord's *son*, and His *first born*, Exod. iv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 9.

The other text, *He shall be called a Nazarite*, I rather think, signifies his singular holiness, which the name imports, and all the prophets foretold of him, and the legal Nazarites prefigured, than that it relates to any particular prophecy. Besides, it is in the text, *the prophets*, in general: *Which was spoken by the prophets.* Ver. 23.

Observe 1. The freedom of God's calling and drawing men unto His

Son; that it follows not the track of human appearances and external engagements. Strangers are brought from far to worship Christ, and are glad at his birth. His own, amongst whom, and those particularly for whom, he was born, were not rejoiced, yea, were troubled at it; so far were they from receiving him as their king, and worshipping him. And strange, that having resolved the Magi's question, they all sit still, for anything we find, and not one is so taken with it, as to take share of the small latter end of their long journey, and to go some miles off, to see so great and matchless a wonder! Thus, many who are far off in their ways, are humbled and brought to Christ, and those who in external profession seemed always near to him, are still far off: *nearest the church*, (as ye say,) *farthest from God*. My brethren, rest not on your outward relations, your interest in the ordinances and profession of religion, but see how your hearts stand affected towards Jesus Christ. If you receive him as king, then shall ye partake of the sweet fruits of his kingdom.

Obs. 2. There was some appearance of reason (though, indeed, reasonless,) that Herod should be stirred with the news of a new-born king; for though Christ's office never wrongs the just power of kings, yet, the jealousy of it will never be out of their minds, while they are not acquainted with him: they will still think that his kingdom encroaches upon theirs; and this is the ground of their almost general enmity against him. But why were the Jews troubled, who could not but apprehend, according to the very notion of the Messiah, that if this was he, he was come for their deliverance and release from the tyranny of foreign power? Yet, they with Herod are troubled. The reason seems to be, they feared that trouble and war would arise by this appearing, and they might possibly foresee much in the way to the change, and therefore would rather have chosen to lie still under the burden of the Roman power. There is a natural prejudice in all against the kingdom of Christ, that it brings disturbance and disquiet with it, and therefore men would rather sleep in their chains than hear of a deliverance by him. Thus, the Jews in Egypt appear to have been prejudiced against the message of their going forth, which Moses brought them. Thus, a carnal heart would comply with its bondage, rather than be at any pains in the remove from it.

Obs. 3. Was the birth of Christ subject to accompanying trouble? Thus it is in the soul, a tumult, as it were, of Herod and the Jews. They that are without, viz., carnal friends, all in a rage at it: "What! turn a melancholy, precise fool, go mad," &c. And within, like the tumultuous multitude, all the lusts of the heart are clamouring for their interest, noising to it, that it will suffer much in this change, that all wonted delights will be cut off, that there will arise much war and trouble by this new kingdom; besides many other doubts and fears that arise in this matter.

Think it not strange to find it thus, that the soul is tossed with disquiet at the birth of Christ in it; but rather let it rejoice in this trouble, as a sign of that blessed birth, and that spiritual kingdom of Christ within it, which, however it occasion some present stir, shall sweetly compensate that, and compose the soul, and make it happy: for the

Child born is *the Prince of Peace*, (Isa. ix. 6,) and the proper nature of His kingdom, that whereof it is made up, is, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. xiv. 17.

Obs. 4. Herod's fear and anger against this news, gathers the priests and scribes together, to give clear testimony from the Scriptures of that very birth which was so hateful to him, and to verify it by the true designment of the place. Thus all His enemies' practices still prove, in the issue, of service to Him: all their stirrings against His kingdom and glory, make for it. When all is reckoned, it is found in effect that they undo themselves, and advance His end whom they oppose.

Obs. 5. *Bring me word, that I may come and worship him.* Ver. 8. This is an old piece of king-craft, we see, older than Machiavel, to serve themselves of the shadow and mask of religion, in order to walk unseen in their atheism. The most of them in their wars and confederacies pretending religion, and intending the subversion of it, would seem to come to worship, and come indeed to worry. *Cultum pretendit, cultrum intendit.*

Obs. 6. Though Herod and the priests were both enemies, yet they concur to this testimony, and furnish it to the inquiring strangers, but went not with them, nor so much as sent any. Thus many testify, yea, teach the truth of Christ in the general, yet go not to him, as signs in the way direct others, and stir not themselves. But, my brethren, think it not enough to give a general assent to divine truths, for unless the heart be warmed with them, and the soul stirred up to seek an interest in them, they save not, yea, they more deeply condemn.

Obs. 7. Divers readings of the Evangelists and prophets, agreeing in one sense, are very useful. Bethlehem *the least*, yet, *not the least*; the least of thyself, but the greatest by the birth of the great King born in thee. Thus all are raised and ennobled by Christ. The poorest persons, and things in themselves most despicable, yet, through him, become most excellent. The simplicity of the ordinances, the word and sacraments, so far below the pomp of the world, and gaudy, false worship, in outward visage, yet are much further above them in inward dignity. Thus, the soul of a poor, simple, unlettered believer, that is the meanest and least in itself, far below the greatest persons and great wits of the world in naturals, yet, Jesus Christ being born in it, is not the least, but in spiritual excellency truly great, and far beyond all others void of Christ.

Obs. 8. Christ newly born, is hotly persecuted, put to flight, &c. This is a presage of his after condition and entertainment in the world in his own person, and still in his body, his Church, the saints. No sooner is Christ born in thee, than the wicked will be upon thee, seeking to kill him with persecuting malice, with scoffs and taunts at the least.

Obs. 9. All his motions are by divine direction. Thus, his saints in all times, particularly in times of straits and troubles, must still be depending on His pointing out of every step, and are safe in following that.

Further, we may observe, that they whom the Father intends to bring to the Son, shall not want means of their calling and leading to him. He will create a light in them, and cause it to arise in their

hearts to stir them up to inquire after him. And when they need direction, and seek it, He will furnish it even where it would be least expected. If they be driven to attend it at their hands who go not to Christ themselves, even under a ministry that hath little life in it,—that is formal and spiritless in itself, yet, if God hath cast thy lot there, even there, I say, shall a soul seeking after Jesus Christ find direction and confirmation, and the word shall be made lively to it by a higher Hand; and though they go not to Christ, yet shall they give thee His true address, and direct thee right to Him, as here the scribes and priests did these inquirers.

Again, observe how God takes hold of men by suitable ways. His call does not lie wholly in the congruity of the means, but He makes it effectual; yet, He carries that efficacy so sweetly, that there is not any violence at all. Often in the means, that sweetness consists in the particular aptness of them. These were star-gazers, and he gives them notice according to their faculty by a star. Thus, some are taken with some accessory qualification of a minister, baited by this to give ear and take liking to his doctrine. Thus, St. Augustine confesses he was caught in hearing St. Ambrose, through delight in his eloquence; for though he looked no further, yet, together with the words he loved, the things that he loved not did likewise slide in and gain upon him. Again, they undertake a long and hard journey, and resolve to go on, and, missing him at Jerusalem, they inquire there concerning him, and will not leave off till they find him. A soul that hath once seen a light pointing out Christ to it, and stirring it up to seek after him, will not be driven back, nor called off from going to him, by any discouragements and difficulties; yea, they sharpen it, and set an edge on it, and make them so much the more earnest. Others can speak of him, and lie still, and not stir to go to him, as here the priests; but such a soul must have him, and will not take rest without him; will still inquire where he is, where and how I may find my Christ. A man may possibly meet with some formal minister, that knows little of Christ, and loves him less, who yet can tell such an inquirer, that by believing he shall find him, and instruct him somewhat about the notion of faith, and inseparable repentance, and leaving off sin, which things he himself, who directs, makes no use of, hath no experience of at all; yet may his information be useful to the soul seeking Christ, and in following them it may find him. And as it is in the first inquiry and journey to Christ, so, in after seeking, upon his withdrawments: as Cant. iii. and v. Though the watchmen that should direct thee deride and mock thee, yea, though they smite and wound thee, yet, if once thou hast found the sweetness of his love, or but heard his voice speaking to thy heart, and desiring it to open to him, thou wilt not leave off thy search day nor night, till thou hast found him, in how mean a condition and outward appearance soever: thou wilt see through that, and behold him thy king, thy beloved Lord, and see him beautiful, all beauty and loveliness, and wilt be forced to declare him so, that he outvies all creature loves, as not worthy to be compared: yea, that their enjoyments have not near so much sweetness as the very seekings and mournings after Jesus Christ.

Ver. 11. *Fell down and worshipped him.*] When a soul is busy

asking after Jesus Christ, if it be inquired what would you do with him, Why this is my purpose, will it say, I would worship him. I would not only be saved by him, but I would fall down and adore him, and acknowledge him my king; and if I had any thing better than another, I would offer it him. But what hast thou? Hast thou rich presents for him? Alas! no. These are called wise men, and were, it seems, rich; had rich gifts. I am a foolish and a poor creature, and I have nothing to offer.—Nothing. Hast thou a heart? Yes: a heart I have; but, alas! there can be nothing more unfit for him, and unworthy of him: it is dark, and foul, and hard, all disorder and filthiness. Yet, wilt thou give it him as it is, and be willing that he use and dispose of it as it pleases him? Oh, that he would accept of it, that he would take it upon any terms! Here it is: if it would fly out from this offer, I would he would lay hold of it. Oh! that it were once received by him, that it were in his hand; and then let him do with it what seems him good. Sayest thou so? Then it is done. Give it really and freely, and he will take, and make it better at its worst, than all the gold, and frankincense, and myrrh of all those rich countries where they abound, and will purify, rectify, and make it quite another thing than it is. And it shall never repent thee to have made a gift of it to him. He shall frame it to his own likeness, and in return will give thee himself, and be thine for ever.

CHAPTER III.

ALTHOUGH the enemies of Jesus Christ, and, for a time, even his friends and followers, mistook the nature of his kingdom, yet he is a king. This being questioned, he himself avowed it before the Roman judge; and even in his low estate on earth, yet were there intermixed signs and characters of royalty. To instance here no more, the former chapter hath the history of one of them, and this of another. In that was the homage done to him a little after his entering into the world by birth. In this, we have his harbinger preparing his way a little before his coming forth into the world, to manifest himself in his words and works.

This chapter, you see, contains the history of John Baptist—1st. The nature of his office; 2dly. The exercise of his office; and that both generally to the multitude of the Jews that resorted to his baptism, and particularly, to some of more eminent note amongst them, the Pharisees and Sadducees, and singularly on the person of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 1. *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the Wilderness of Judea.*] This relates not to the history that goes before, but to that which follows to be recorded, as the usual style of the Hebrew bears. It is clear that many years fell betwixt even the greatest part both of Christ's life, and of John Baptist's; in both which, from the birth to the coming forth to preach, all the intervening time is past over in silence, not only here, but in all the other evangelists, saving one act of Christ's appearing in public about the age of twelve years,

recorded by St. Luke, which was but a glance of this jewel, that lay locked up a long time after.

John the Baptist, an extraordinary person in his birth and calling, holy from the womb, *a prophet, and more than a prophet;* and Jesus Christ himself far more than he, his Lord and Master, the Prince of Prophets; and yet, neither of them came abroad in his ministry till about the age of thirty years, the time specified in the law for the service of the house of God. But our ignorance makes us bold and foolhardy: we rush forward not knowing ourselves nor this calling, its excellency and holiness, and our meanness and unholiness. This I say, not that I think measure doth punctually and literally tie us, especially the necessity of some times and the scarcity of faithful labourers being considered, upon which some may lawfully, yea, ought to be drawn forth, if unwilling and yet able.

But surely, the consideration of these examples should give a due check and curb to our usual precipitate hearts, which in these times had need of some restraint, even in some who possibly have some competency both of abilities and true piety. Good fruit may be plucked too green, which, let alone awhile to ripen, would prove much more pleasant and profitable.

In these two, their long lying hid is so much the more remarkable, inasmuch as besides their singular fitness for appearing much sooner, they had so short a time allotted for their course; the Forerunner but about one year, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself but about three years and a half. But this was the assigned time in the Divine wisdom, which was found sufficient for the work committed to them; and what needs more? Let not any grudge for themselves, or for any other, their speedy removal, upon this conceit, that they might, in nature's course, continue much longer, and, in appearance, through their labour be still more serviceable. Let all rather study for themselves, and wish unto others, that they may be diligent in their work while their day lasts, be it short or long, faithful and fruitful in their generation, and the shorter their day is like to be, work the faster; for certainly the good of life is not in the length of it, but in the use of it.

There are betwixt our Saviour and this his messenger or forerunner, divers notable agreements: their being near of kindred; their births taking place in one year, and both foretold by an angel; and as Christ was the son of a virgin, John the son of aged parents, and a mother so long barren; little odds in the time of both their appearing to the world, and abiding in it; both sealing their doctrine with their blood. But as in these, in all, the Lord hath the pre-eminence beyond his servant, so this faithful servant did always most willingly acknowledge it, yea, his very business was to abase himself and exalt his master; and this he did, as we find throughout his history. And those of the servants of Christ that are most honoured to be nearest him, are always the greatest abasers of themselves, the most desirous to have him honoured.

John's office, we have briefly expressed in the first verse, partly in his name John Baptist, a minister of baptism, and partly in the word joined with it, preaching. Preaching of the word was joined with baptism: *John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness.*

I will not here speak of the nature of baptism, the combinement of preaching with it; their aspect each to the other, and concurrence to one excellent end; the word unfolding the sacrament, and the sacrament sealing the word; the word, as a light, informing and clearing the sense of the seal, and it again, as a seal, confirming and ratifying the truth of the word: as you see some significant seals or signets engraven, have a word about them expressing their sense.

But truly, the word is a light, and the sacraments have in them of the same light illuminating them; and this of Baptism, the ancients do particularly express by light. Yet are they both nothing but darkness to us, till the same light shine in our hearts: for till then, we are nothing but darkness ourselves, and therefore the most luminous things are so to us: noonday is as midnight to a blind man. And we use these ordinances, the word and the sacrament, without profit and comfort for the most part, because we have not of that Divine light within us; and we have it not, because we ask it not, are not often there where it is to be had, nor earnest suitors for it: for we have His word that cannot fail, that our Heavenly Father will give even this choice gift, this light, (for that is it,) His *Holy Spirit to them that ask it.* Then would word and sacrament be sweet to us, which now are so lifeless and unsavoury.

Ver. 2. We have in the following words the sum of his doctrine: *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* In the point of time and the way of his ministry, he was indeed singular; yet, the substance of his doctrine is the same with those that went before, and those that came after him. All the prophets preached repentance, and joined in the prediction of this kingdom of God; and our Saviour himself, and his disciples, as you will after find, preached not only this same doctrine, but even in the same words: only this he had particular, that he stood betwixt the two, as it were, *the link of law and gospel*, as one calls him, and was the first that said, *The kingdom of God is at hand*, and pointed it out as come while he was speaking.

Repent.] This is the main purport and end of God's messages to man in all times, by all whom he hath sent, (as has been already said,) prophets, apostles, Jesus Christ and his forerunner; and still, all His ministers under the gospel, have no other in effect to say, than to call men to repentance, to bring them home to God. Man is naturally turned away from God, and is still further running away and hastening to the pit; and God is calling after him, Do not destroy yourselves, I will receive and pardon you; *Oh! return, why will ye die?* And yet, men will not hearken, but run to their ruin. This word is daily preached; and yet, who almost is persuaded so much as to stop his course a little and consider what is propounded to him, much less to break off his course and return? Oh, the bountifulness and graciousness of God, who thus entreats, and still entreats base worms, whom He might tread on and crush in a moment! Oh, the wretchedness and madness of man who refuses, and still refuses those gracious entreaties! You have been called to in these terms, and where are they that return? Where are hearts breaking for their iniquities; and breaking away from them, mourning after the Lord, and longing for a look of His countenance, and desiring nothing else? Oh! that some

soul might now be stirred up, and set but upon thoughts of repenting, serious, real thoughts that would not die! The Lord will reach forth his hand and draw it to himself, though it find it cannot stir; yea, in that very desire of returning to him, he hath prevented it and touched it, and will not lose it, will not suffer it, and his begun work in it, to perish.

For the kingdom of Heaven.] Ay, this is the attractive, that which puts life and hope into the soul. Jesus Christ, peace and reconcilement in him to God,—this is *the kingdom of Heaven*. And here it was *at hand*, and it came, and was published through the world. And throughout all ages of it, the gospel is *at hand*, in the gracious offers of it to all that hear the word; and it is brought into the souls that believingly receive the word, and Jesus Christ revealed in it. This gives both hope to the sinner, and stirs up desires. Were there not a way of receiving him, it were in vain to call men to return; but seeing there is a ransom found—seeing the way is opened up—who is there that have eyes opened to behold that mercy, that will delay any longer? that will not hasten into it, and lay hold upon it?

The Gospel is not a doctrine of licentiousness, but the pure and sweet word of that new life which is in Christ. And though in the notion of repentance, there is an aspect to, and use of the Law, convincing of sin and death, and working a sense of misery and sorrow from that sense, yet all this it works most sweetly and kindly, contempered with, and adapted by, the doctrine of the Gospel; for in this they mix and agree, and throughout all the Scriptures of both Testaments, run combined, as they do in the words of this sermon here. For this is the sum of the Law and the Gospel as they now stand to us-ward; *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Nothing is so powerful as the doctrine of free grace to convert a soul, not excluding convincements of sin by the Law, but so including them that *that* deadly, killing sentence, thus prepared, becomes excellently medicinal; (as the treats that are made of viper's flesh;) the Law, in regard of condemning power, being now dead, and not only dead, but so qualified by the cordial promises of the Gospel, that it does not really condemn, but only shews condemnation out of Christ, and so causes the soul to close with Christ, and find salvation and life with him: as the dead viper's flesh, so compounded, hath a secret virtue to advance the working of those ingredients that are in the composition against poison.

For the kingdom, &c.] This is the logic and rhetoric of the Scripture, to persuade holiness and repentance by the grace and pardon revealed in the Gospel. Those beams of love and free mercy are most powerful to melt the heart. Now, says he, the great Messias is at hand. He is come: whatsoever have been men's ways before, now they may come home unto God in him. And will not they, seeing he is come from heaven to save? Will they not come from the way of hell, from sin, to be saved by him?—And thus the Lord Jesus is daily set before us, and, in him, free forgiveness of all that is past; and if men will perish in multitudes, they must perish; but you that have a mind to live, come to him.

Ver. 3. *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias.*] His calling is further expressed and confirmed by a prophecy of him, designating him by the nature of a *voice, The voice of one crying in the*

wilderness; and his cry is, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord,* &c., which suits well with the foregoing sum of his preaching, is in effect the same with it. *Repent* is, *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight.* Repentance levels the heart to God, makes it a plain for Christ to walk in, casts down the mountains of pride, and raises the soul from base, low, earthly ways and affections, smooths the rugged passions, and straights the crooked deceit of the heart, makes it sincere and straight both towards God and man. And then the reason, *The kingdom of God is at hand,* is implied in that, *Prepare his way;* that says, He is coming, is upon his way, and therefore sends his harbinger to make it fit for him. And this is our business, to be dealing with our hearts, levelling, smoothing, and straightening them for our Lord, that he may take delight to dwell and walk in them, and refresh them with his presence; and, certainly, the more holy diligence is used in suiting the heart to his holy will, the more of his sweet presence shall we enjoy.

Ver. 4. *And the same John had his raiment of camels' hair.*] He is further described from his habit and course of life, suiting the nature of his calling, and the strain of his preaching. A preacher of repentance, not willingly resorting to courts and cities, but keeping in the wilderness; that was, not a place altogether uninhabited, but a less peopled, mountainous soil, the very place of his birth; who had his habit and diet like the place, and like the employment. Though his solitude and rough garments are a slender hold for the hermetical way magnified in the Romish church, when that of Zechariah fits better, and their clothes are sooner shaped to that pattern, where he speaks of those false tongues that *wear a rough garment to deceive,* Zech. xiii. 4; —yet, certainly, besides somewhat extraordinary and singular in him and his calling, to which this was consonant, there is this for the example of all the messengers of God, to live as much as may be in their condition and station, disengaged from the world, not following the vain delights and ways of it; not bathing in the solaces and pleasures of earth, and entangling themselves in the cares of it, but, sober, and modest, and mortified in their way of living; making it their main business not to please the flesh, but to do service to their Lord, to walk in his ways, and *prepare his way* for him in the hearts of his people. Further, this was implied in this mean way of life, that the less of human grandeur, the more of Divine power, and of the majesty of God, might appear in his ministry.

Ver. 5. *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.*] That is, great multitudes flocked to him, to hear him, and be baptized. For though Baptism, in the way he used it, was not usual, yet their accustomed use of legal worship made it the less strange, and the more acceptable to them. And being accompanied with the doctrine of repentance, remission of sins, and the news of the kingdom of heaven approaching, it could not choose but find some reverence and attention. But certainly, of multitudes that will run to the word, and, possibly, particularly flock after the ministry of some for a time, there may be many, as doubtless were there, that are but light stuff, carried with the stream as corks and straws are. Men should examine well even such things as seem to speak

some love to religion in them, whether they be real or not. This, John does not spare to tell home to the seemingly best of those that came to him, that esteemed themselves, and were esteemed by others, more religious than the multitude. Yea, the Spirit of God directed him to deal more sharply with them than with others that came to him; they being of all others commonly most confident of self-righteousness, and therefore furthest from the true work of repentance, which humbles the soul to the dust, and lays it low in its own eyes: these sects being, beyond the multitude, swelled with conceit of their own estate, he spares the rest, and pricks them sharply, that the tumour may fall. It may seem somewhat strange that he entertains so roughly those that came respectfully to him, and with others were willing and desirous to hear his doctrine, and partake of his baptism. Was not this the way to beat them back, and make them distaste both?

There is, indeed, much prudence required in the ministers of the word, to know to attemper their admonitions and reproofs, that by too much rigour they discourage not weak beginners who are inquiring after the ways of God; but withal they should be no less wary that by too much credulity and lenity they sooth not any in their formality and carnal confidence. And the most we have to deal withal, commonly are in most hazard upon this hand; there is too little heart-humbling. And many are ready to take up some piece of reformation of their ways, and the externals of religion, and deem themselves presently good Christians. Oh! the deceit and slothfulness of our hearts! How ready are we to lay hold upon an easy guise of our own, and think what some further press, is but melancholy and needless preciseness!

Ver. 8. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*] Though he wonders at their coming, and fairly tells them so, yet he rejects them not, despairs not of them; he gives them sound advice, which implies always some hopes of prevailing. Give none up for desperate; catch hold of what they do, to drive them to what further they ought to do. You profess to *flee from the wrath to come; bring forth fruits then.* You say you are Christians and believers: Oh! let your ways and lives say so. Let Christ dwell in your hearts, and be shewn in your lives.

Ver. 9. *Think not to say, We have Abraham to our Father.*] The foolish heart is still leaning to this fancy of external relations and privileges. Beware; rest not on these,—the reformed religion, pure ordinances, or a place of esteem possibly amongst the strictest sort of reformed professors. And do not think you put an obligation on religion, and that it is indebted to you; but pray take heed. God can leave you, and deliver you up to these vain thoughts, and provide Himself without you. He can draw the remotest and unlikeliest to Himself, and let you go.

Ver. 10. And this is a sifting, trying time. He comes, who will unmask your hypocrisies, and search you to the bottom; *who will lay his axe to the root of the trees,* and cut up the fruitless. Where the Gospel comes in greatest power, there is the certainest and saddest weight of judgment on the unbelieving and impenitent, the formal and fruitless.

Ver. 11. *I indeed baptize you with water.*] The true badge of a

messenger of Jesus Christ is, to abase himself and to magnify his master. *Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, may, possibly, have some aspect to the singular sending of the Holy Ghost in fiery tongues. That purifying virtue, that flame of love, Oh that we found it!

Ver. 12. And only they, *the wheat*, are for *the garner*, they that are pure and spiritual: *the chaff*, light and vain hearts, are fuel for the fire. No middle class: we must be either baptized in that fire, or burnt in this.

Ver. 13—15. In the baptism of Christ, observe the exemplary humility both of the master and of the servant: of the master, in subjecting himself to this ordinance; of the servant in administering it, first, in his modest question and declining it, and secondly, in his quiet yielding and obedience. He that was so pure and spotless, had no need of that, or any other washing; *He, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world*, as this John testified; *He, the fountain opened for sin and iniquity*, and therefore, well says he, *I have need of thy baptism*. Yet here he humbles himself to be baptized. Oh! that we who are baptized had more of his likeness in this humble reverence for Divine ordinances, looking on them as his in every warranted hand. What though he that teaches be less knowing and less spiritual than thou that hearest, one that might rather learn of thee, yet the appointment of God obliges thee to attend as humbly and regardfully to his ministry as if he were an angel.

John recoils a little. Thus truly, as he in regard to the person, so will every humbled, self-knowing minister, even in reference to the ordinances themselves, wonder often, and be sometimes at the point of forbearing. Oh! who am I, to handle such holy things, to stand in so high a service, to convey life, I that am dead; to administer so high, so pure and purifying ordinances, myself so impure! But again, being commanded and engaged of God's own hand, that overcomes and silences; and in the continuing in the work upon that consideration, there is no less, yea, the greater humility, than in the other thoughts of unfitness; a submissive resignation of a man to his Lord. However the matter seem to me, and truly I deem myself unworthy of the lowest employment without thee, yet, Thou appointing, I have no more to say: good reason Thy will stand, and not mine.

Ver. 16, 17. Now, in the Baptism, the humility of both is richly rewarded with so glorious a vision and voice. The thing is mean and low in the common form of it; baptized in the common river. Oh! what transcendent glory in such a manifestation of that blessed Trinity on earth, that is the perpetual wonder and happiness of Heaven. Oh, that we had eyes to see it, and that our hearts were more taken with this glance here, and the hopes of full vision ere long! *Like a dove.* Oh! that *that* Spirit were more abundant in us, flowing from our *Head*, on whose head it here rested.

My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.] In this word lies all the comfort of a Christian. No pleasingness, nor acceptance, indeed, out of him; but in him, all acceptance of all who are in him. Nothing delights the Father but in this view. All the world is as nothing in his eye, and all men hateful and abominable by sin. Thou, with all thy good-nature, and good breeding, and good-carriage, art vile and

detestable out of Christ. But if thou get under the robe of Jesus, thou and all thy guiltiness and vileness, then art thou lovely in the Father's eye. Oh! that we could absolutely take up in him, whatsoever we are, yet shrouded under him! Constant, fixed believing is all. Let not the Father then see us but in the Son, and all is well.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.

The Apostle doth fitly style our Lord Jesus, *the captain*, or leader, *of our salvation*. He marches, leads all the way, puts us on nothing that he hath not first encountered. And in his going before, there is that decorum there marked, Heb. xii. 10: *It was meet he should be made perfect by sufferings*. So particularly by this kind, that is the sharpest sensation, by these he was entered into his calling; initiated or consecrated, as the word there is. Let none, therefore, of his followers think to go free. If you mean to follow Christ, reckon for temptations, to meet them even at first, and so in all the way. We readily misreckon, though warned; we count as we would have it; write up such ease and joys, *&c.*, and think not on afflictions without, and temptations within, which yet are much our portion here. Unwise to put to sea and expect no storms, nothing but fair weather! Let this be our warning, that we be not secure; we shall meet temptations. But let this be our comfort, that we be not dismayed, that in this we do follow him. He went before us in this conflict, and overcame before us, and for us; and we likewise, in his strength, shall overcome.

Then.—When? Look backward. *Then*—presently after he was baptized, and not simply by the water of Jordan, but by the Spirit from Heaven, and was singularly replenished, *full of the Holy Ghost*, as St. Luke hath it, Luke iv. 1. Thus shalt thou be sure to be assaulted when thou hast received the greatest enlargements from Heaven, either at the sacrament or in prayer, or in any other way; then look for an onset. This arch-pirate lets the empty ships pass, but lays wait for them when they return richest laden.

Then.—Again, look forward. *Then*—when he was to enter on his work, his public ministry. Thus look to be assailed, when thou art to engage in any special service. Each according to his place will find this: when he is upon some purpose of honouring God in any particular undertaking or course, and is nearest the performance, then shall the strength of hell be mustered up against him. Now, knowing it to be thus, this ought rather to embolden than discourage us in any such way. This expert enemy knows his interest well, and does not thus bestir himself lightly, but feels that his kingdom is in danger, and that he shall certainly be a loser.

Now, as this is incident to every Christian, and particularly, according to the eminency of their service, to ministers of Jesus Christ, as

here to him when towards entering on his own ministry, so, in this, they should reinforce themselves in him; should follow him on, and apply and employ him for the victory.

This [Temptation] was one of Luther's schoolmasters, and so it is to all the servants of Christ; and so are all the three, Prayer, Meditation, and Temptation. And this is very needful, that both with the more skill, and with the more compassion, they may be helpful to them that are tempted. Certainly, in all things, experience gives the deepest sense and the readiest faculties. He who was here tempted, could know more by speculation than ever any man; yet was it found meet, that even He should be trained by the experience of these things, as in that cited place, Heb. ii. 10,—*perfected* as captain, made a complete commander by hard services, sufferings, and temptations. So Heb. iv. 15, and v. 2—8. Men expert in war, laugh at the learnedest discourse of pedants, as is reported of Hannibal.

Oh! heart feeling is a main thing in this. It is going to the wrong hand, for a troubled or tempted Christian to go to an untroubled, untempted minister, who never knew what that meant. Their errand takes not: they find little ease in complaining of their grief to him that never felt such a thing; as Nazianzen observes, that they who are stung with a serpent, cannot endure to bemoan themselves to any but some that have felt the pain. To have found such trouble, and then an issue, such and such comfort,—Oh, it enables much in that case. See 2 Cor. i. 4, 6.

Led by the Spirit.] That same Spirit that came down on him in baptism, chap. iii., here leads him forth to his conflict, not for this alone, to seek it, but leads for such exercise there, wherein it was designed and appointed to meet him. The Spirit in us doth not carry us wilfully seeking of temptations; yea, we pray by His direction who was thus led, that we may not be *led into temptations*; that is, that we may be so led into them as not be left to them and foiled in them; but he leads us into those places and employments, when we follow his leading, wherein, by God's disposal, we do meet with temptations. And to be thus led any way whatsoever, is safe, and the issue happy, as here it was. That is sweet in all things, to be carried; not to go of ourselves any way, but that of each step it may be said, *Led by the Spirit.* Led to be tempted, on purpose that he might return with the glory of the victory.

Into the wilderness.] This is the field chosen for this duel betwixt the roaring lion of the bottomless pit and the royal line of the tribe of Judah. This serpent tempted the first Adam in the garden, and the second Adam in the wilderness, with different success indeed; and ever since doth still tempt the posterity of both, in all variety of places and conditions, in several ways suitable. Company and conversation have their temptations; and solitude, even the wilderness, hath its own too. No place or estate on earth is privileged; no business, not lawful labouring, eating and drinking, yea, not fasting and praying; yea, in these are readily the most assaults, but in them likewise the sweetest victory: as here.

Ver. 2. *And when he had fasted forty days.*] Though this was a miraculous and extraordinary fast, as a mark of his extraordinary per-

son and calling, and of the ministry of the Gospel's harmoniously according with the Law and the Prophets, Moses and Elias, yet, surely a holy fast it was, wherein our Saviour (as those his forerunners, no doubt) fed upon prayer and Divine contemplation.

He hungered.] So all along, as in this fast, so, with his following hunger, Divine power combined with human weakness, such as was sinless.

Ver. 3. *If thou be the Son of God.*] Doubtless the Tempter was in some doubt himself about this; though he saw many concurrent proofs of it, yet thought possibly it might be otherwise, and therefore tries. And as he expresses his own doubt, so he suggests the doubt to our Saviour. It is vain to specify these three temptations by three particular sins, for they are each complicated and made up of variety, as usually all sins are. In this I would not exclude something of working on appetite, stirring to an impatient, intemperate haste in satisfying that; and the exception is weak, that it is not delicacies, but bread that is propounded, for that is as strong a temptation in extreme hunger as delicacies; but the main is unbelief, and so making haste. So, in the first temptation of our first parents, the matter of pleasing appetite made some ingredient, but the chief thing was unbelief: *Yea, hath God said?* Gen. iii. 6. And so here, *If thou be the Son of God.* And as that was joined to pride, stirring them to a proud desire to be gods, so, in this case, Satan aims at drawing a needless show of it, that Christ was God. And our Saviour's answer meets all these suggestions: that of his pressing hunger, finding another answer for it than bread; that is not the only thing for it; that of doubting or unbelief, (as it was the main evil, so the main of the answer stands opposed to it,) trusting in the word of God, that is, in His power and effectual support. I need not myself try conclusions to see whether I be the Son of God, nor (which answers the bent of it) need I at this time give a trial that I am the Son of God. So he diverts the satisfying him in that point of his Godhead, and answers only for a man: *Man shall not live upon bread alone,* &c.

The second and third temptations, whether they were by change of place, or representation of species, as I think it cannot be forcibly either concluded or refuted either way, so it is not of much benefit or importance that it should be. The notion of throwing him down headlong, (though it is not thus urged by any that I remember,) seems to me with the strongest appearance to incline to a real standing upon the place; for if not, then it was necessary that both the place and the steepness should not only be represented to our Saviour's imagination, but that he should really believe that he was there; otherwise, the temptation of casting himself down from thence were altogether null, and could have no place. Nor, though it may be granted that he might suffer a false representation, (somewhat of which must likely be allowed, to make up the third temptation, with the advantage of a high mountain,) yet, whether we may fairly admit in our Saviour an apprehension of such a false representation as true, should be considered.

But leaving that, we find the second temptation to be, clearly, to a presumptuous tempting of God, and the third, to the horridest apostasy

from God, even to worshipping of the devil, and that baited with an offer of the world; first to commit idolatry to it, and then next, to himself for it. He is clearly beat off in all; it could not be otherwise. But truly this may seem strange, that Satan durst suggest such horrid, foul notions, to so holy, so singularly holy a man, for that at least he knew him to be, and had strong suspicions that he was more than a man, even the Son of God.

And this I think the sovereign satisfaction of a soul, in the matter of blasphemous injections, which many, even holy persons, are troubled with: much is said to it by many; but surely there is nothing like the view of this instance. That he uses thee so, what wonder? He had the hardiness even to use thy Lord so, who was so high above all stain of sin, as in all things, so in these. True, indeed, we cannot well avoid all soil, but some guilt sticks to us; as from the throwing of a dirty ball against the wall, though it is presently beat back, yet it leaves a spot behind; our nature being so easily receptive of sinful defilement. But he was altogether undefilable in all assaults; yet this is our grand comfort, that he was tempted, and even that with such vile things. So then, if finding any such thing, cry to him for help, as one who can feel it, and entreat him to see how grating these thoughts are to thee, and to pity thee, and repel Satan; and he will do it, and will account those not thy sin at all, but his; and, if anything stick, will wash it off with his own blood.

Observe. The Devil can cite scripture. Receive not, then, every-thing at first, that comes with an *it is written;* and as not everything of men's opinions thus backed, so, not those doubts that are raised within thee, and managed against thee in this way. How often does Satan make a poor believer at a stand by some scripture objection! But take this course; follow thy Captain in this. Satan is a liar, and cuts and pares when he cites; as he here left out, *thy ways*, to make room for *Cast thyself headlong*, which was not the way. Now our Saviour does not contest with him about this, takes no notice of that sleight, but, in a plain, full counter-blow, beats him out of it, gives him another *it is written*, that carries clear how he abused his. And there is admirable wisdom in this, much more than if he had disputed about the word which all observe here, was cunningly left out; for in this, our Saviour teaches us our better way in this case, either with perverse men, in the avouching of their errors, or with Satan, in his thus assaulting us with misalleged scripture, not so much to subtilize about the very place or words abused. It may be so cunningly done sometimes, that we cannot well find it out; but this downright, sure way beats off the sophister with another place, clearly and plainly carrying that truth which he opposes and we adhere to. So, though thou canst not clear the sense of an obscure scripture, thou shalt always find a sufficient guard in another that is clearer.

Our Saviour was pleased thus to bear many assaults, and thus to fence and beat off the Tempter by the word, both for our instruction and comfort, who otherwise, for himself, could immediately have repelled him, and sent him back at first. But indeed he *pleased not himself* in anything; had an eye to us in all he did and suffered, and did all in reference to our advantage. Oh, how should we love him!

And let not any abuse of the scripture, by Satan or by men, abate our esteem, or lead us to abandon our use of it; but let us study it still, labour to be well acquainted with it, make it our magazine, have ready our defences from thence in all kinds of assault. Oh! let this word dwell richly in us, for it is our life. A stone out of this brook smites Goliath. And observing these evils here, labour to be fortified against them. Surely they were main ones, that were brought forth in this combat. Ready we are either to distrust our God, or, in abused confidence, to presume upon unwarranted ways. And for the third temptation, how strong is it, though not to gain that gross point of disclaiming God for love of the world, yet, how many hearts are secretly and insensibly inveigled and stolen away from Him by it, drawn to neglect His worship, or to cold remissness in it, and to follow the ways of the honour, gain, or pleasures of this world, that Satan suggests, and so to worship him and it altogether, instead of the Lord our God, whom alone we are to adore and serve, and whose due is all our heart!

Ver. 10. *Get thee hence, Satan.*] Thus, when anything moves to debauch and draw off the heart from God, it is to be beat away with indignation. And thus in all conflicts, continue fighting in thy Lord's strength: give not over, resist still, and the enemy shall flee, as here.

Ver. 11. *Then the devil leaveth him.*] Retires indeed, but it was *for a season*, as St. Luke hath it there; ch. iv. ver. 15. So we should still make for new onsets, and not promise ourselves, upon a cessation, perpetual quiet, but rather fortify in those times of breathing. But this know, that our Lord is tender of us, and will inlay our painful conflicts with sweet comforts. Let us remember to call our Lord to take him off, and he will not see us surcharged or tempted above what we are able, or he enables us, to bear; and he will refresh us with consolations, strong consolations as we need. And these in a high degree usually follow hard conflicts patiently and stoutly sustained. Our Lord had a cordial draught both before and after this conflict: before, in the last verse of chap. iii., he was confirmed in the very point he was assaulted in; *This is my beloved Son.* And as he was confirmed before, so was he comforted after; *The angels came and ministered to him.* Oh! the sweet issue our Lord gives to many a sad battle of weak Christians, wherein they possibly thought once, that was lost, and that they should never hold out, and come through But never think so: we shall come through all, and the day shall ours.

Ver. 12. *Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee.*] We need not fear. God uses men, but needs them not: when they are restrained or removed, he can provide more. When John is shut up, Jesus comes forth.

Ver. 13. *And leaving Nazareth.*] Not being honoured in his own country. So, commonness of things makes them cheap and low with us, how excellent soever. This disease of lightness and novelty, so natural to us, we have need to watch against.

Ver. 14—16. *That it might be fulfilled,* &c.] Now the prophecy is raised to its higher sense. The relief which the prophet speaks of, in relation to a temporal sense, was but a shadow. This is light indeed,

Jesus coming into their coasts; the Sun of righteousness arising. Oh, how pitiful is the condition of those nations that still are in darkness, destitute of his light! How should we pity them! But how much more pitiable their condition, who, in the midst of this light, are still in darkness; it shining in their land, but not in their hearts! These still are under *the shadow of death*. Oh! fear and tremble, you that in the clear Gospel light, are sitting still in your natural darkness of mind and hardness of heart, and still loving that darkness, and refusing this Divine light. Oh! let it in, that you may live, and not pass from darkness to darkness, from inward darkness to utter darkness, where is *nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*.

Ver. 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach.*] So gave he forth light by preaching, showing the way of salvation. And He was eminently *the light*,—He that very way of salvation. He, the Prince and Saviour exalted to give repentance, and remission of sins, and the kingdom, yet humbles himself to be the Herald, to proclaim his own gift and pardon. And in humbling himself to this work of preaching, he hath highly exalted it. Shall ever that be accounted low, and fit only for mean persons, which the Lord of Glory made his calling and work in the world?

And to say, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.] This was said before to be the sermon of his Forerunner; not only the same sense, but the very same words. He who needed to borrow from none, but gives all to all, yet disdains not to preach this over after John Baptist. There is certainly a pride and vanity in the minds of men, in that extreme affecting still either to speak or hear new things. Oh, were you called together often, and this said as from God, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, and found obedient, now one heart yielding, and then another, though it might seem poor to vain heads, yet oh, what excellent preaching were it! God's voice more regarded and owned, would make that sweet which we often despise.

Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Oh, sweet invitation, the offer of a pardon to a repenting sinner! but how much more that of a kingdom. He might say, *Repent, for the prison of Hell is at hand*, if ye do not; but rather he this way draws, by the happiness and glory attending our return.

Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And at hand to you, if ye repent, to be yours; grace and all the rich promises of it, and, within a while, full glory. And no more ado; it is *at hand*. Let go your hold of the one, and straight catch hold of the other; it is *at hand*. But who believes this? If we do, what madness is it not to accept it!

The chapter hath, first, our Saviour's preparation to his public calling; secondly, His begun administration of it in all the three parts, preaching of the Gospel, calling disciples, and working miracles.

Ver. 18. *And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren.*] Here we have the calling of two pairs of brethren, both of the same calling, *fishers*, to a higher calling of the same name, *fishers* still, but, *of men:* that is the excellency and dignity of it. Not now to follow out the resemblance, there is much art in this divine fishing of human

souls, both in casting the net in public preaching, and angling in private converse.

Ver. 19. *And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*] This was as Elijah's touch to Elisha, *What have I done to thee?* Did our hearts once hear his voice, net would not entangle us; nor cables bind us; no friends, nor parents, nor business would hold us: we should break from all, yea, if it might be otherwise, would run from all, to follow him.

Ver. 23. *And Jesus went about all Galilee.*] Here observe his Divine power and goodness shining forth in the miraculous cure of all diseases. But these bodily cures were but preludes of the main work; but signs hung out to show where the physician of souls dwelt. And whatsoever be thy spiritual maladies, though never so many and so desperate, yet come. Never any came to him and went away uncured.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain. And when he was sat, his disciples came unto him.

Ver. 2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor, &c.

Others may grow stale, but this sermon, never so often read over, is always new. Oh, how full of Divine doctrine! How plain, and yet how high and excellent, delighting the soul as a bright day, clear light all along! We need not strain for the clearness of it upon that word, *He opened his mouth;* for every word here spoken, speaks for itself; carries, as light does, its own evidence. He begins with that great point which all are concerned in, and all naturally someway desirous to know, the doctrine of blessedness, in short aphorisms; and the rest of his discourse follows out the same argument, directing the way to happiness in those graces, *purity*, *meekness*, *mercy*, &c. For although all grace is radically one, and he that hath one, hath all, yet they are thus specified: 1st. For the weakness of our apprehensions, which take not full views so easily, they are spelled out to us, but only so, that taking them the easier severally, as letters of one word, we may set them together again, as all being one *blessedness*. 2dly. Though every true Christian hath all graces, yet all are not alike eminent in all. We may confidently say, that there is no one who equally excels in every grace; but in several persons, several particular graces do most act and evidence themselves, shooting up above the rest; yea, in one and the same person, one grace will, at some times, be more evident and sensible than at others. 3dly. They are thus parcelled out to us, that we may apply ourselves the more particularly sometimes to the study of one, sometimes to the study of another, the neglect whereof is a great cause of our great deficiency in them all. We hear them and like them, may be, and think, these are good, but we do not set to the attainment of them: we applaud, and leave them there; approve all, and neglect

all. If at any time we have any desires after them, they are general and confused: we grasp at all, and catch nothing.

This I would recommend, to be more particular in our purposes; sometimes to set ourselves to some one grace, not secluding nor turning away the rest, for that cannot be, but yet, more particularly plying that one, were it *humility, poverty of spirit, meekness*, or any other; and for some time to make that one our main task, were it for some weeks or months together, and examine every day's practice in that particularly. But like unsettled students among many books, we rove and reel, and make offers at every grace, and still lag behind, and make no considerable purchase nor progression in any.

Now, for blessedness, what is the common voice, at least, of men's minds and practices, though they speak it not out? *Blessed* are the rich, the honourable, the well-landed or well-befriended, and they that can grow great enough in the world. But if we believe *this* Teacher, it is not these; no such matter. But if blessedness be in things spiritual and inward, then men would imagine readily of those things which sound highest, that have some grandeur, and somewhat heroic in them,—in great knowledge of faculty, and zeal for high services, or in raptures, and ecstasies, and singular divine experiences. But here there is nothing of these neither, but the meanest, most despised things; yea, those that (some of them) seem to sound as miserable and sad: *The poor in spirit—they that mourn—the meek*, &c. Oh! sweet, lowly graces, *poverty of spirit, meekness*, that grow low, and are of dark hue, as the violets, but of a fragrant smell; as one says, chief in garlands: these are prime in the garlands of a Christian. Oh! study these; seek to have them growing within you. Suffering remarkable martyrdom may seem to have some lustre in it; but how take you it, to be reviled and scoffed at, and hated, and taunted, by Christians in name, because thou desirest to be one indeed?

Each of these beatitudes, for all the low sound at first, ends high, and makes good the title. *Blessed are the poor in spirit;* ay, they are the only rich, heirs to a kingdom, and such a kingdom: *theirs is the kingdom of God.* Lofty, vain minds are truly base. By *poverty in spirit* is meant, I conceive, not only a sense of spiritual want, (though commonly it is so taken,) but, more comprehensively, a lowly frame of heart, not swelled either with desires, or delight, or conceit, of any worldly advantage, or self-excellency, either outward or inward. Thus may a man be, amidst very many such advantages and riches, *poor*, and that is his blessing. Yet here is connoted, I conceive, the condition of outward poverty as more suiting, and usually more connected with that temper of spirit. In St. Luke it is, *Blessed are the poor*, opposed to the rich. And he that is poor in spirit, if outwardly poor, is truly rich in the midst of poverty. So, *they that mourn shall be comforted, and the meek shall inherit the earth.* Not that this is their all, for *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, also. But this word from the Psalm carries a fit promise, that meekness, seeming to be that which makes a man a prey to every one, and easily wronged and thrust out by all, yet shall be provided and protected, and he shall enjoy so much even of this earth as is fit for him, with more quiet and sweetness, than the proud and boisterous, who are ever, almost, in contentions.

The pure in heart, abridging themselves of sights and enjoyments that the world seeks after—sensual delights, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,*—shall have a better sight, and purer joy, suiting them; sweetest communion with God here, and ere long full vision; *for they shall see God.* So in the rest, it is clear.

Blessed are they which are persecuted——Rejoice.] Look off from your sufferings, and each way you will find matter of encouragement and joy. Look back to *the prophets that were before you,* and look forward to *the reward in heaven* that is before you. The firm belief of that kingdom, that glory above, that vision, what will not make easy to forego or undergo, to do or suffer? It is the want of that belief that keeps the low things of this earth so high in our esteem.

Ver. 13, 14. *Ye are the salt of the earth—ye are the light of the world.*] This next point particularly concerns the disciples, and after them, the ministers of Christ. In these resemblances lie their dignity and their duty; and the former is used for urging the latter; and that is the best view of it. Let men look as much as they can upon the excellency of this their high calling, so that it raise their spirits to high endeavours of acting suitably to it. What a simple thing, to feed self-conceit by this! Alas, poor man! He is *light* indeed in another sense, who grows vain upon it that he is called *light,* and does not rather tremble that he is so unlike it in this. *Salt*—What were all table provisions without this? *Light*—What were the world without this? Christ communicates his own name to them, *The light of the world.* All the children of God are children of light, but his messengers more eminently so. Men that think ministers a needless commodity in the world, if they give any belief to the Gospel, may see what they are: and if you could live well without salt, and without light, so might ye without ministers.

But, alas! how much unsavoury salt, how many dark lights are amongst us! And if the salt lose its savour, it can do good to nothing, and nothing can do good to it. The most unprofitable piece of the world, is either a profane, a carnal, or a formal, dead minister; he is good for nothing,—unsavoury salt, of all things the most unsavoury. And *if the light within thee be darkness,* (as our Saviour says afterwards,) *how great is that darkness!* Oh, that Christ shined more in our labours, in our conversation, and in companies where we come; that we were more savoury and seasoning others; not in jestings, or in sports, (these salts are unsavoury in ministers,) but in words of edification, *ministering grace to the hearers!* And this, though it specially applies to ministers, yet extends to all Christians. *Let your light so shine,* not to make yourselves somebody, but for the glory of *the Father of lights,* whence you have that light, *your Heavenly Father.* Oh, that this were predominant in all! Happy that heart that is filled with constant desires of this, and that aims at the glory of God, minding self in nothing, but God in all!

Ver. 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.*] He lays hold of this, takes occasion upon clearing a mistake that had arisen respecting him, to pass on to such doctrines as he knew were necessary for the clearing of the Law of God, wronged by false glosses; and he thus vindicates both himself and that Law

whereof he was the lord and author. Some, possibly, to obstruct his way, and prejudice him in men's opinions, spake of him as a teacher of new doctrine, and an enemy of the Law: others, it may be, hearing of a doctrine that sounded new, would willingly have had it so, would have been free, and enjoy libertinism. Now, to dispel both misapprehensions, our Saviour owns his purpose to be nothing such. On the contrary, *I come not to destroy*, but *to fulfil*. This did he in all things, in doctrine and in practice; and he declares it a thing impossible for any to annul the Law; that if any should offer at it, in his actions or doctrine, he should undo himself, but not the least tittle of the Law. Yet, further, these men that cry up the Law, and would charge me with the dissolving of it, for all their noise, I declare to you, that except you take heed, and observe that Law better than they do, ye cannot enter into Heaven. How many deceive themselves, as these self-pleasing, vain men did! But be warned. *Except your righteousness*, your religion, go beyond the civil neighbour, the good church-keeper, the formal, painted professor, ye shall fall short of that which both you and they reckon upon. How many, who think themselves fair for Heaven, shall find themselves wofully mistaken, when it is past help! Oh! examine well in due time, and see whether you are indeed for Heaven or not. It is the saddest mistake ever man fell into, to dream on of Heaven, till he find himself in Hell.

Ver. 21. *Ye have heard, &c.*] Now he clears the Law, and teaches the true spiritual sense of it, in divers points of it, wherein it was grossly abused; shews that it binds not only the hand and the tongue, but even the heart. Men aiming at self-righteousness by the Law, and desirous of that as cheap as might be, with the least pains, not being willing or able to rise to its perfection, drew it down and shaped it to their imperfection; cut it to the measure of external obedience, and that of the easiest size. Thus men readily do; they rather fancy the word and rules of Christianity to their humours, than purge and correct those humours by the word. This exposition of the sixth commandment, condemns not only gross murder, but rash anger and reviling speech, as a breach of it, and condemnable: which is expressed in allusion to the civil judicatures among the Jews, and thence, in case of any such thing, he presses speedy and undelayed reconcilement, as a thing most acceptable to God, and without which no other homages or religious performances would be acceptable to him. Now it is not only anger without cause that is condemned, but vain, undue anger, exceeding cause and measure. Were there the consciousness and constant regard of this; were every reproachful or disdainful word, every harsh look, every rising angry thought against thy brother looked on as murder, Oh, in what order would it put thy tongue, eye, and heart, in this respect! This we hear, and think it should be thus, but we have not resolved that it must be thus, do not watch and pray that it may be so, after an unchaste look and touch of impure desire, though not breaking out to act, yea, though not ripening within to full consent.

And by occasion of this, a man being ready to think, Oh, how strait, how hard is this! he adds, in verse 29, a useful advice, and a powerful encouragement with it. *If thine eye offend thee*—any thing

that proves a snare, how dear soever, as a right eye, or right hand. Men are loath to pare off or abridge occasions of sin, where some strong interest binds them. But thus to go whole and sound to hell! —Oh! better limp to heaven.

Ver. 31, Then follows, of *divorce*, which, upon any difference, was worn into common use, and opinion of lawfulness. Afterwards, he speaks of usual *vain swearing*, a sin which men have always affected, even they who, by profession, are God's own people: at which a man might wonder, did not we find it so lamentably true. But yet, *Swear not at all*, not after the liberty you take by swearing either by heaven or earth, thinking thus you spare God's name; but swearing by them must have relation to God, and so his name is interested. But Oh! a little reverence for the great God would make thee tremble at it. Nothing is a stronger evidence of a graceless heart, than oaths and profane swearing.

Lastly, at ver. 43, we have that sweet doctrine of not revenging, but patiently bearing, and readily forgiving of injuries, and loving enemies, and doing good to all. This does not bar any calm way of self-righting, to which there is sometimes an obligation: but men over-stretch it, and passion and self-love domineer, under this pretext. Therefore, the words sound a little extreme, as a counter-bowing of our crooked hearts, but it is to bring them straight. Let Julian and other atheists laugh at it, but it is the glory of Christians. No doctrine or religion in the world, presses so much clemency and innocency, and bounty as theirs, even to sworn enemies. This, we say, is its glory. And whereas it seems to render men sheepish, to make them less than men, it makes them indeed more than men, even like God. Benignity and mercy are Divine and Godlike, chief traits of God's image in his children. His sun rises, and his rain descends on the just and the unjust. So, a diffusive, sweet, bountiful soul, is still desiring to do good, by hand, by counsel, by any comfort within its reach towards all, rewarding good for evil. These things, deeply thought on and really practised, would make Christians indeed, children like their Heavenly Father.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST's business upon earth was, to bring man to Heaven. He came down, and became man, for that purpose; *came forth from God*, to *bring us back to God*. 1 Pet. iii. 18. As his life and death, so his Divine doctrine tends to that, to enlighten the minds of men with the right knowledge, and inflame their hearts with the real love of God. We are drowned in sense and the love of earthly things; and in spiritual things, our hearts are sensual and earthly. Now you perceive the doctrine of this chapter, clearly aiming at the raising of men's hearts to Heaven. That is the end of the Gospel and all preaching, that men may learn in all their actions, to eye God more and man less; to be less earnest and careful for earth, and more for Heaven. This is the scope of the chapter.

These two main evils in the heart of man, hypocrisy and earthliness, spring from ignorance and forgetfulness of God. Deep persuasions of God and heavenly things, would set men and earthly things very low in our hearts. Would it be possible for men to love the praise of men more than the praise of God, if they considered what He is, and what man is; how high and how lasting a good is His liking and approbation, how poor and vanishing a thing in man's good opinion? Oh, atheism, atheism! hence springs the love of present things. Both these go under that name, present esteem, and present possessions. The one, the love of air, (as I may say,) the other, the love of earth; and both spring from want of belief and love of Heaven, so high above both. This is the great work, to call off the eye from this low prospect, to raise it up higher, to look *not on things seen, but on things not seen.* And Oh, the odds! *Things that are seen, are temporal: things that are not seen, are eternal.* 2 Cor. iv. 18. At this our Saviour aims his discourse, to persuade men to singleness of heart in their performance of religious duties, and moderation of mind in their provision for earthly necessities.

Having spoken of doing good in the former chapter, he speaks now of the manner and intention which is chiefly to be heeded, to exceed the Pharisees, who did many outward actions, particularly of these here specified, but spoiled all by the wretched desire of vain glory; a subtle evil preying most on best things, alms, prayer, &c.—a moth that breeds in and corrupts the finest garments.

The duties he particularly names, are these three, *Alms, Prayer, Fasting.* Alms I scruple not to call a religious duty, though of the Second Table, upon the apostle St. James's warrant, Jam. i. 27. And the way of it which our Saviour here teaches, will make it religious indeed: to regard God in it, not to seek to appear to man, yea, to seek not to appear to man; to hide and cover it all that thou canst from men. We are commanded, indeed, in the former chapter, to *let our light shine before men:* this here is not contrary, yea, *that* is the same with this: *this* barring vain self-glory, *that* directing to God's glory. *Let your light shine,* but *so* shine, (like the sun that gives light and scarcely suffers you to look upon itself,) *that they may see your works,* yourselves as little as may be, and *may glorify,* not you, but *your Heavenly Father.* Good actions cannot well be hid, and possibly, some even of this sort, giving of alms. Yea, sometimes it may be necessary for example and exciting others, that they should know of it. But take heed that vanity creep not in under this. And further than either unavoidable necessity, or some evident further good of thy neighbour carries it, desire to be unknown and unseen in this. When it must be public, let thy intention be secret. Take no delight in having the eyes of men on thee: yea, rather count it a pain, and still eye God alone, for he eyes thee. And remember it, even in public acts of charity, and other such like, *He sees in secret.* Though the action be no secret, the spring, the source of it is, and He sees by what weights the wheels go, and He still looks upon that; views thy heart, the hidden bent and intention of it, which man cannot see. So then, though in some cases thou must be seen to do, yet, in no case do to be seen: that differs much, and where that is, even the other will

be as little as may be. Thou wilt desire rather, and, where it can be, still choose to do unseen, that others should know as little of thy charity as may be, besides the party that receives it; yea, if it might be, that even the party might not know,—as he that stole in money under his sick friend's pillow; yea, to let thy very self know as little as possible, as our Saviour here expresses it, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* An excellent word! Reflect not on it as thy action, with self-pleasing; that is the left hand in view; but look on God' goodness to thee, that thou art not in the receiver's room, and he in thine; that He makes thee able to relieve another, which many are not, and being able, makes thee willing, which far fewer are. For both, thou art to bless Him, and be the humbler, the more thou dost. Take thy very giving to thy distressed brother, as a gift from God, a further obligation on thee. Though he is pleased to become thy debtor for a further reward, yet, truly, the thing itself is His gift, and a great one, as David acknowledges excellently in their offering to the Temple, 1 Chron. xxix. 14: *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly, after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.* Not only the power, but the will is from God, both *of thine own which we give Thee.*

Oh, how far are the most from this direct looking to God, this heart-enlarging love of God! And therefore are they so close-handed to the necessities of the poor, even of the saints, where some enforcing occasion, some eye of men, some wretched side respect or other draws it not forth. A thousand objections are raised: either they need it not, or will not accept of it, or have this fault or that, are proud or idle, &c. But does not thy God see what is at the bottom of all this logic, these disputes before they come off with any thing? And when thou dost give, how much of self, and how little of God is there in it! The left hand knows, yea, it is done with the left hand, though the bodily right hand do it. Most men's charity is altogether left-handed: sinister respects and intentions are the main movers in it.

But how noble and happy a thing is a truly liberal heart! Even natural liberty hath much beauty in it, but much more that which is spiritual and Christian. According to thy power, abounding in good works, that is riches,—*rich in good works;* and *he that soweth plentifully, shall reap plentifully.* And be cheerful in it, and do this for God, out of love to Him. And for the fruit, how rich is that! So much as it is fit to look to reward, look to God's only. Take Him as thy debtor upon His word, rather than present payment from men. Theirs is present indeed, and our carnal hearts are all for the present, but consider, as it is present, so it passes presently, and is straightway spent. God's reward, though to come, is yet certain, and when come, is abiding, everlasting. Thus, in respect of all good actions, and a holy self-denying course of life, in nothing take pay of men. How vain, what smoke is it, their breath, and how soon will it be spent! And then, when thou shouldst come to look for a reward from God, to know it is done, that you are paid already! That well judged, is one of the saddest words in all the scripture, the hypocrite's doom. He hath no more to look for; he would be seen, and was seen; he would

be praised of men, and praised he was; he is paid, and can expect no further, but that reward which he would gladly miss, the hypocrite's portion, *eternal fire*.

As to *Prayer*, how foolish and how wretched a thing is it, to speak to God, and look to men! What is there wherein the heart will be single and abstracted from men, and commune with God alone, if not in prayer?

Another evil, much like to that of shew, is here corrected, an affected, empty, babbling, length in prayer, without affection. The want of that, makes a short prayer long and babbling; while much of that, makes a long prayer short: as in a speech, the quality is the measure of the quantity, a long speech may be very short. This affected length we incline to very much in holy exercises; many beads are dropped, and *paternosters* said, &c. We lay too much stress on the continuance and length; think all's well, if enough be done; whereas God's thoughts are far other, and ours should conform to his. It is enough if well done. If the heart is close to him in ever so short a prayer, there is much said in a little. We usually speak many words, and say little. For help in this, the most excellent model given by our Saviour, is here inserted; the beautiful order and full comprehensive matter of which, can never be enough admired.

Then as to *Fasting*, which is a necessary help of Prayer; it does unclog and free the wings of the soul to mount to Heaven; and in some respects, it is a help to alms too. The same rule must here be observed, to appear as little as may be; for the affected discovery spoils and loses all, yea, the needless discovery runs too much hazard, therefore it is by all means to be avoided. Personal fasting should be conducted secretly. Practise constant temperance. Better to let the bridle be always short held on thy appetite, than sometimes to pull it in extremely, and then lay the reins loose again; that is the way to stumble and fall in both.

Ver. 19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.*] In these words our Saviour enforces the other point of *moderation*. The heart in Heaven, and fixed on the true treasure there, is the only way to regulate and moderate the desires in all things on earth. For it is the distempered love of earthly things, that causes all the distracting care about them; and the cause of that distempered love to earth, is ignorance of Heaven, and disaffection to it. Men may discourse of many considerations, and sometimes think soberly, how foolishly man turmoils, and *is disquieted in vain*, heaping up, and not knowing who shall possess, and knowing certainly that not he very long, that he is shortly to leave all. But these things will not prevail; men keep their hold. Not only their hands, but their hearts, are still fastened to what they have, and what they would have still more of, rather than of those excellent things which would call them off from earthly enjoyments, to fix them on heaven and immortality, if these were really believed.

Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.] Inward decay, and outward hazards! The treasure *above* is free from both. Oh, that ours were there! But hearts that are so little there, make it very questionable. Oh, for an eye single and pure, enlightened to behold that blessed hope, and to fix upon it! Can an

heir of Heaven be much troubled upon earth? Impossible. If at any time his heart bends that way, will he not straightly check himself, and think, What am I doing? Is this my business? The Gentiles seek for them, and look for no more: they must make the best of them; but would I be content with this for my portion? Where lies my treasure? Who is my master?

Ver. 24—34. *No man can serve two masters.—Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life.*] Our Saviour here argues against the service of the world; first, as unworthy a servant of Christ; secondly, as impossible for him; thirdly, as needless, and that at large. *Your heavenly Father knows your need*, and cares for you. Ye need not both care; his care is sufficient. Further, it is fruitless: such your perplexing care is, for due diligence in one's calling, is not barred; yea, that is to be used, that we may care the less. Then, it avails nothing. Ver. 27. *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?* Lay these things together. Your Father will care and provide. He that clothes the lilies, and feeds the birds, will he allow his children to starve and go naked? Then think how preposterous and absurd to distrust him in these petty things, when you trust him in so much greater.

Ver. 33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God.* A kingdom! Oh, seek that, and account, as he does, all things else but accessaries, a parcel by the bye, to be cast in. But alas! little see we of that great inheritance, that kingdom, and therefore these little poor things seem so great with us.

CHAPTER VII.

We have here continued the dropping of the Divine doctrine of Christ, distilling as the dew in several brief rules, as pure pearly drops of heavenly wisdom, in divers particulars of main use and concernment.

First, there is a direction concerning judging of men, ver. 1—6. Then, another, regarding the supplicating of God, ver. 7—11. After that, the straight rule of equity given us, ver. 12. And then, the straight way of happiness recommended, ver. 13, 14. Lastly, a double word of caution to undeceive us, both in the discerning of others' teaching, and our own learning, ver. 15—27: we are to beware that we be not deluded by false teachers, and that we delude not ourselves, being false learners under the teaching of truth. These are most weighty points; but light vain hearts are little taken with them.

Ver. 1—5. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*] This is a most common evil in man's perverse nature. Even moral men have taken notice of it; yea, almost every man perceives and hates it in another, and yet hugs it in himself. This is the evil—unequal judging; sharpsightedness in the evils of others, and blindness in our own. And this very evil itself, of unequal judging, we can perceive in another, and overlook in our own bosom. What discourse fills most societies, and consumes their time, but descant on the conditions and actions of others!

Lawful judgments in states, for the censuring and punishment of crimes, are not barred; nor, in private persons, a prudent discerning of what is evil and sinful in others, and judging accordingly of it. But this *judging* is, the usually taking the chair to censure all persons and affairs about us; the prying into the actions, yea, even the intentions of men, either through a false glass, seeing faults where there are none, or through a magnifying and multiplying glass, making them appear many more than indeed they are. This is done, first, by a curious searching into the actions of others; secondly, by the censuring of good and indifferent actions as evil; thirdly, by hasty, rash censuring of doubtful actions, though a little suspicious; fourthly, by a true censuring of evil actions, yet not with a good intention,—not to amend but to defame thy brother; and, fifthly, by a desperate sentencing of the final estate even of the worst.

This is here declared to be dangerous and preposterous. 1st. *Dangerous*, by drawing an answerably severe censure and judgment upon ourselves, usually even from men, but, however, certainly from God. Thou that playest the arch critic on all around thee, art thou without fault? Hast thou flattered thyself into such a fancy, as to think that thou art above all exception? Is there nothing, either a true or a seeming blemish, for any to point at in thee? Surely there is something, some part lying open, that men may hit at thee; and they will surely not miss to do it, if thou provokest them. However, remember, if thou shouldest escape all tongues, and pass free this way, yet, *One* unavoidable searching hand thou must come under; *His* judgment who sees thee to the bottom, and can charge thee with the secret sins of thy bosom. He can and will so pay thee home, all thy unjust judgments of thy brethren, with just judging of thy ways and thoughts, that thou thyself shalt confess no wrong is done to thee. *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*

Then, 2dly. It is *absurd* and *preposterous*. *First cast the beam out of thine own eye.* If thou wouldst, to any good purpose, take knowledge of thy brother's failings, begin at home; so clear thine eye as to discern aright. A heart well purified, speaks the most suitable and pertinent reproofs, and they prove the most piercing and powerful.

Shall these things prevail, my brethren? Were it love to God, a fire of holy zeal, it would seize first on things nearest it; but it is a flying, infernal wildfire, running abroad and scattering itself. Is not this the grand entertainment? Such-a-one is a foolish person; another, proud; a third, covetous. And of persons professing religion, yet will ye say, They are as contentious, and bitter, and avaricious as others; or, at best, if you have nothing to say against them particularly, yet, All is dissimulation; they are but hypocrites. And while a mind is of this vein, believe me, the most blameless track of life, and in it the very best action, how easy is it to invent a sinister sense of it, and blur it!

But oh! my brethren, be not so foolish. Blunt the fiery edge off your censures on yourselves, where it is so safe and advantageous to be thorough and home. Just the opposite to this, judging others incurs sharp judgment; but judging thyself is the way not to be judged. 1 Cor. xi. 31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be*

judged. This is the happy and gainful severity. Learn, then, to look upon others, and all their ways, with the highest charity, which *thinketh no evil*, is witty and inventive of good constructions upon anything that may clear them, as malice is of miscensures of the best things. Take all candidly and mildly by the easiest side, the right handle. And for thyself, search thy heart; sift, try thy best actions, find out thy own earthliness, thy pride and vanity, thy selfishness and hypocrisy, even in good. A self-searching Christian is made up of humility and meekness. If thou wouldst find much peace and favour with God and man, be very low in thine own eyes. Forgive thyself little, and others much.

Ver. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.*] The former rule abates the sharp eye of rash judging; this quickens and clears the eye of right discerning: that was for the moderate censuring of evil; this is for the prudent imparting of good. Be ready to communicate spiritual good to all, yet so as, if men do evidence themselves to be as dogs and swine, to have that high esteem of holy things, as not to prostitute them to their contempt and rage, and wrong both those excellent things and yourselves; *lest they trample them*, as puddled swine, not knowing their worth, *and turn again and rend you, as* enraged dogs.

Holy things—pearls. So are they esteemed by all that know them; the sweet and precious promises of the word, the excellent high calling of a Christian; and their price is inestimable. *The pearl of great price is*, Jesus Christ, revealed in the Gospel. Oh, learn and seek after high esteeming thoughts of him and of Divine things. Learn to be rich in those, and to covet them indeed. And though imparting them to others, it impairs them not to yourselves, and therefore, you are to be ready and free that way; yet, because of some manifest despisers of them, learn this wisdom in that matter, *Give not holy things to dogs.*

There is an imprudent zeal, and sometimes a mixture of an irreverent commonness, in speaking of holy things indifferently in all companies. Certainly, such company willingly ought to be chosen, as give most liberal and kind entertainment to such discourse. But when not of choice, but by some unavoidable engagement, we fall among others, then our rule ought to be, not to partake of their ungodly ways and communication; but for the communicating, in another way, holy things to them, this must be well advised on, whether it be suitable to this rule. We are not, indeed, to give persons easily up for desperate, as dogs or swine; this were to fall into the former fault of rash judging; but where they are evidently such, the respect of holy things is to be preserved, and not unwisely to be exposed to their derision.

Much need is there of a spirit of wisdom in this, without which there is no instructing by rules, so as to guide us aright in all particular occurrences and societies; therefore we are to beg that *anointing* that *teacheth us all things.* 1 John ii. 27. Speak willingly to God, but still with holy fear in thyself, and it may be entertained with holy fear to others.

Ver. 7. *Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*] This is for advantage to all. For wisdom to follow the foregoing and following rules, the great

purveyor of a Christian, is prayer, and the great qualifications of prayer, are *perseverance* and *fervency*. *Ask—seek—knock;* be earnest and importunate; give not over. And the great support, the very life of prayer, that which quickens and continues it, and keeps it from giving over, is *faith*, a firm persuasion of audience and attainment. This is here ascertained by our Saviour; proved by irrefragable argument. All good is promised to be given, and that which is the top of all, the chief to be sought, *the Holy Spirit*, is promised *to them that ask it*, as St. Luke hath it. We say our prayers, and there is an end. And this perfunctorious formality creeps even upon Christians who are unwary and slothful, and hence so little is obtained. Many that pray, know little of this Divine art of prayer, this wrestling with God, this resolving not to let Him go until He bless them, as Jacob did.

Ver. 12. *Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*] This is added, and seems connected, but it is another rule apart, and that great rule which all know and few observe,—in equity, in charity, meekness, and all due respect. Self, self undoes all, and sets the world on fire. Though it be a separate precept, yet it may have some aspect to the former respecting prayer, as, if you would have God condescending, and favourable, and bountiful to you, be so to men; and so you shall be, if you change places and suppose yourself in their room, and they in yours. *This is the Law and the Prophets:* that is, all is of this nature. Duty to others, as pressed in the Law and the Prophets, is reducible to this.

Ver. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate.*] This is undeniably a main point; yet, alas! we seem not to think so. How disinclined are we to the way of eternal happiness! The difficulty is so represented as to add an edge to our earnestness, not to abate and weaken our endeavours. This way is strait indeed, but there is still room enough within. John xiv. 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions.* The ease and delight there, shall abundantly compensate all the trouble in the way. We must resolve then, if we would not perish, that we must take this way, how strait and rugged soever, and strip and put off all that entangles and encumbers,—that swelling pride, those superfluous desires and lusts; yea, to put off and leave behind even self itself. Once in at that gate, we shall find all perfectly compensated. And remember, they are few that enter; few there are that so much as seek it, but far fewer that find it, even of those that make some kind of seeking after it. *Many shall seek to enter*, (so it is in the other Evangelist,) *and shall not be able;* therefore, *strive ye.* What bustle is there made by sea and land for scraps of this earth, and Heaven alone is so cheap in our eyes, as if it were worth no diligence, scarce even a serious thought! Surely, either Heaven is but a fancy, or the world is mad?

Ver. 15. *Beware of false prophets.*] Not to go wrong in our way, we must take heed not to mistake our guides, (especially as so many in all ages give themselves out for such,) that they mislead us not, wrapping error in truth's mantle: yet, there is ever something to a discerning eye, that will readily discover them. As for the grand deceiver, the Devil, the vulgar fable, that in all apparitions whatsoever there is

still the shape of a cloven foot, holds true, for there is something in their carriage that, narrowly eyed, will tell what they are. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.*

Ver. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*] But every man is his own worst deceiver; therefore he ought most to beware of himself. Whether teacher or learner, he is his own false prophet, *speaking peace where there is no peace.* Therefore, beware of yourselves. Delude not yourselves with a vain trust in an empty profession. *Not every one that says Lord, Lord*—that makes much noise and sound of the name of Christ, yea, that bears his name to others, that preaches him. Oh! how many shall find themselves to have misreckoned in that day, when they are not owned by Him, but commanded away by that sad word *Depart!* Look to it, therefore, to the truth of denying yourselves, and your own will, and yielding yourselves up to God:—*but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven,* says our Saviour. Oh! take heed of founding your house *in the sand.* Though ever so stately and fair built, and shewing fine, yet that foundation will be its ruin. There is no safe building but on the rock, *that Rock of salvation* who here taught this doctrine. Then come storms as they will, there can be no fear. *He that buildeth on Him shall not be ashamed.* 1 Peter ii. 6. No matter what houses or lands ye have here, whether any or none,—He himself had none here,—provided you build on Him as the foundation of eternal blessedness. Oh, that men would think of this, and amidst all their ensuring of things still unsure, would mind the making of this sure, which may be made so sure for ever, as not to be moved!

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.*] A Divine way of teaching! Even some not converted, are yet struck and astonished with it, but by this eminently, *He taught them as one having authority.* This not only by a powerful secret influence, on hearts which He touched by his Divine power, but even in the way of his own teaching. And for some measure of this, His ministers ought to seek, and to seek it from Him, if they would find it. There is a force in things spoken from the heart with holy and spiritual affection: even common things thus spoken, are far above the greatest strains and notions, that are only an harangue or speech framed by strength of gifts and study. Oh! much prayer would put life and authority into what we speak. To be much on the mount with God, would *make our faces shine* when coming with His message to men.

CHAPTER VIII.

He *dwelt among us,* says St. John, *and we saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.* This all his history testifies of him, both his marvellous doctrine foregoing, and his miraculous works that here follow.

Ver. 1. *When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.*] A thing he noways regarded, yet would not hinder; yea, he continued teaching and working those things that drew them. His delight was not in their flocking after him, but in instructing and doing them good.

Ver. 2. *And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him.*] Whether this was intended as the highest kind of civil reverence, as to a prophet, or Divine worship, as to God, it is not easy to aver, because it is hard to determine what kind of persuasion he, and the centurion, and others now coming to him, had; how little, or how much, or if any apprehension of him as the Messiah and Son of God. This being as yet not much noised abroad, yet they might have it by special revelation from God. A high confidence, however, there was of a Divine power being with him for the greatest works. This is clearly expressed; and in whatsoever notion it was, our Saviour takes it very graciously, and grants their suits. We are commonly unsatisfied with all that comes not up to our own height; but our meek Redeemer cherisheth sincerity, and accepts of what he finds, even the very least, and extols it to the highest pitch it was capable of.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.] Strong confidence and humility are contempered in this word: confidence in asserting full power in Christ for the work; (the doubt of his will cannot be challenged as injurious or unbelieving, for he had as yet no warrant absolutely to believe that he would;) the humility in the way of propounding it, not daring peremptorily to sue for it, but moving it thus, as a thing in his hand to do; the sense of his vile disease and other unworthiness, it is likely, depressing him, and forming his desire in this style only, as representing and reserving the matter with humble submission, as resolved not to quarrel nor complain if he should refuse, but to acknowledge pure compassion and goodness, if obtained: *q. d.* Lord, it becomes not such a horrid, polluted wretch to say any further than this, I believe, and crave leave to say it out, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

Ver. 3. *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him.*] And this humble motion is as graciously taken: he hath straightway real experience both of the power that he believed in, and of the good-will that he durst not think himself so sure of, yet had (no doubt) some good hope of. Thou sayest, I can? I say, *I will: be thou clean.* And the touch of his hand is a concurrent sign of his goodness and condescension. That word had power enough alone, without the touch; yet it goes not alone, lest it should look like a disdain of touching. He is pleased, therefore, to put his pure hand to the defiled skin of this leper, being in no hazard to receive pollution by that touch by which the leper received a cleansing. And thus in his word he speaks to sinners, where he hath revealed his will together with his power; and that we may doubt it not, we may read it in his blood streaming forth for our cleansing. Yet, if any one, out of a deep sense of his vileness, think, I know that he can cleanse me, but will he look upon such a one? Or, if he look, will he not straight turn away? Will he vouchsafe to touch my filthy sores, and apply his own precious blood for my cleansing and healing? Yes, *He will.*

Speak it not as doubting, but as humbly referring the matter, thou mayest even in the same style, say, Lord, I am filthy as ever any that came to thee, yet, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* And thou shalt find that powerful cure from a word of his mouth, and a touch of his hand, that all thy scrubbing, and washing, and bathing in legal self-cleansings, could never have attained; and that not only as to the guiltiness, but likewise as to the power and polluting filthiness of thy sin. And this is to be laid before him in the prevailings of lusts and sinful impurities: Lord, thou knowest how impossible it is for me, and I know how possible, how easy it is for thee, to cleanse me. And if thou shouldst say no more, lie before him, and look upward till he pity thee. If he be not changed from what he was, he *will* pity thee, and thou shalt find it.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus saith unto him, See that thou tell no man.*] This charge not to divulge the cure, besides our Lord's exemplary humility in avoiding noise, was that he might wait the fitter time of discovering himself, and because as yet, it might rather hinder him: as Mark i. 45. The other Evangelists tell us that the man kept not this injunction, wherein, though he was to be blamed, yet there is some excuse in part, from the ardent affection and overcoming joy that he could not well conceal. Nor are we sharply to inveigh against all the impertinences and imprudences of new converts, in their speeches and carriage in religious things, though they are to be admonished to study prudence. It is no wonder that so high a change does a little transport them beyond their bounds. The *shewing to the priest*, and *offering of the gift*, was both a respect to the Law, not as yet out of date, and a provision for a testimony for Christ, when it should be afterwards known that he had done it. This may be the meaning of that word, *for a testimony to them.* And it is not at all unlikely, that the restraint from publishing it to others, was only till it should be first shewn to the priest, and approved by him as full cleanness, which, possibly, otherwise, out of envy to Jesus Christ, they might have denied, if it had been known and famed abroad as his work.

Ver. 5—9. *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him.*] The history of the centurion hath much of the like confidence and lowliness. He desired him but to say the word, no more being needful for the thing to be done, and no more fit to be desired of him who is addressed. *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.* They that spake for him, as St. Luke hath it, said, *He was worthy for whom Jesus should do this.* He, of a far different mind, sends by others what is here related as his own speech; they speaking what he put in their mouths, that he was not worthy of Christ's presence. His confidence of power in Christ's word to do the deed, he expresses by the resemblance of his own command over his soldiers. He himself being but one under others, was yet so readily obeyed by those under him; and he believed all diseases to be much more under the word of Jesus's command. So, indeed, they know his word, and so, also, he rebukes soul-diseases and they are gone, as the fever in the next history. Oh! if we did but believe this and put him to it! For faith doth so, and in a manner commands him, as he doth all other things.

Ver. 10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*] This man was a stranger, and a soldier, yet, it seems, a proselyte; and our Lord, receiving this as a kind of first fruits of the Gentiles, foretels upon it a plentiful harvest of them: *Many shall come, and the children of the kingdom be cast out.* Ver. 11. This is a harsh word to the Jews; and yet, thus often, the most remote and unlikely, who have long lived strangers to religion, have proved notable converts: and they that have lived from their childhood under a powerful ministry, and with persons professing religion, and have themselves been moulded into a form of it, yet die in their sins, and never lay hold of that salvation unto which they always seemed to be so near. And this near miss of happiness is the greatest misery. *Children of the kingdom* in outward appearance and church privileges, yet, prove children of wrath, not only not entering into the kingdom they had a seeming title to, but *cast out* into the dungeon *of utter darkness!*

Observe the misery of the damned, resembled by *utter darkness*, void of light, and full of hideous noises and cries; *weeping and gnashing of teeth.* And the happiness of glory is resembled to a banquet, where there is full light and joy; a coronation banquet, where all the company of kings *sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.* And this and all other resemblances in Scripture, are but a dark shadow of that bright glory. Oh! were the things of eternity, the misery and the blessedness to come, indeed believed, how much would our thoughts be in them, and how little room would they leave for the trifles and vanities that our hearts are taken up with!

Ver. 14. *When Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.*] He takes humble, compassionate notice of all maladies where he comes, and is touched with the griefs of his own, and so moved as to touch and heal them. This king's *touch* cures all sorts of diseases: it did so while he walked in a low, despised condition on earth, and it does so still by that virtual Divine power, now that he is in heaven; and although his glory there is greater, his compassion is not less than when he was here; and his compassion always was, and is, directed much more to souls diseased, than to bodies, as they are better and more valuable.

Ver. 15. *And she arose and administered to them.*] Oh! thus it should still be; yea, thus it will be. They whom he cures, will bestow upon him the health and strength they have received by him, and shall be serviceable to him. How can it be so fitly and duly employed? Then are all deliverances and favours, outward and inward work, most kindly and sweetly enjoyed, when they are most quickly and entirely returned to their spring, all improved and offered up to Him from whom they come.

Ver. 16. *When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed.*] Upon the report of these works, they run to him in great numbers. Oh, that upon the report of his all-healing virtue published in the Gospel, sick souls were thronging about him! The others were welcome, but these would be much more so. Many

came to him, and we hear of none who were turned away without help. *He cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.* Oh, come hither, all ye that have any thing that troubles you. Is it a lethargic, a dead benumbness of spirit, or is it a fever, a boiling of passions or lusts, yea, is it, as it were, a kind of possession of an unclean or an unquiet spirit? Come forward: here is help for thee. He cured those here, *with his word.* Now that word of the prophet, here applied, (ver. 17.) had its accomplishment in part, even in these works; in his suffering the importunity of the multitudes coming early and late, and suffering likewise the maladies he cured, by the tender compassion he felt in doing it. He is not a hard-hearted, insensible physician; no, he is matchless in love and tenderness, feeling as it were *their* pains who came to him, till they were cured; and he still does feel the pains and groans of his own, on their sick beds. And yet, all this, his curing all these bodily evils, was but a pledge of the higher averring and fulfilling of the prophetical word. Our first disease struck nearer to him by far, than those that he cured: he put on the pain of all our transgressions, the whole weight falling at once upon his back, as the Apostle renders it—*bare our sins upon his own body on the tree.* Now, of that wonderful way of curing, by bearing and transferring over upon himself our spiritual maladies and miseries, there could not be a fitter prelude and foresign, than this of healing diseased bodies. Sickness is one of the bitter and chief fruits of sin. Next to proper spiritual evils, none are more grievous, yea, none so much. It sits the closest, and the sense of it can least be shifted. Other things that are without a man, are capable of more easy diversion; fancy, or reason, may bear off much; but paining sickness will not be so lightly argued out: the demonstrations are very sensible and conclusive.

As in other things, so it is here; Health, the chief of temporal blessings, as much as any thing passes unesteemed and unconsidered while we enjoy it. But Oh! a fit of sickness makes it sweet, gives it the highest recommendation: the groans and plaints of a sick bed are the most powerful rhetoric to commend health. What can a man enjoy of all the pleasures and pomp about him, when blasted by one sharp pain seizing upon any part of him? Amidst all attendance and furniture, he thinks the poorest scullion in his house, that is in health, much happier than he for the time. Yet this we think not of, while we eat and sleep, and have tolerable health; consider not that continued mercy, how great it is; think not on the difference between that, and loathing of all food, weary, restless nights, and tossings to and fro until the morning.

Now I say, this considered, the goodness and power of Jesus Christ were most fitly manifested in this way, as introductive to the great deliverance from sin and death, he came to effect for us, by bearing them himself, in our stead, and so taking them away. And so, in cures afterwards, as you find in the next chapter, he began to let out somewhat of that, as the main: *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* And without this, what is health itself, though in its kind very precious, especially when so speedily and easily restored after sickness by a word or a touch? Yet, what had this been but a little reprieval,

while the sentence of death, yea, eternal death, was still standing, and shortly to fall on? Oh! the lifting of that desperate sinking burden, our sins, and taking them upon himself for us! How far do all words, and what is larger, all thoughts, fall short of the height of that love! Oh, boundless, immense love! It will take up eternity to consider it.

Ver. 18. *Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.*] Other reasons may be imagined for his withdrawing from these, but it appears that his work now lay elsewhere, and he was to go through it. And the other Evangelists are express in this: *I must preach also to other cities, for for this came I forth.* He had much work, and a short time to perform it in; so he follows it diligently. Thus his servants ought to go or stay, indifferently, for all places and services, as they are called, and not to please others and themselves, but Him who sends them.

Ver. 19, 20. *And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, Foxes have holes,* &c.] Strange! Our Saviour seems to turn off the very ready and full offer of one, and to put forward another who drew back. He is, indeed, absolutely free in his choice, and may without control do this, let pass high temporary fits and offers, and lay hold on what hath far less appearance. And the truth is, he is privy to the secret actions of men's hearts, and can discern in some of a very plausible zeal and forwardness, some false principles within, whence it is kindled; and in others more slow and inactive, sees under that more sincerity at the bottom. This scribe, possibly, taken with the splendour of Christ's miracles, and the flocking of multitudes unto him, perceived not his present poverty and meanness, and after disgraces and sufferings. Many make lavish offers to religion at a time when it is in request, or possibly upon some discernment of its own worth and beauty, but do not count the cost; consider not the enmity of the world, the outward meanness, the reproaching and despisings that usually attend it. It is indeed by far the best bargain with all those who count the cost, if men would understand it right, and think it so ere they engage in it.

Now we see what condition Christ, who was Lord of all, chose for our sakes, amidst his own to live as a stranger, having no property, not so much as the beasts and the birds. *He became poor to make us rich,* 2 Cor. viii. 9; not rich in those things he was poor in, but in things infinitely better. In that, he calls his followers, most commonly, to a conformity with himself: he forbids not, indeed, property and possessions, but surely we should learn amidst all to walk, in affection at least, like him, as strangers here, not glued to any thing, *using the world as though we used it not.* And they who are really thus as he was, Oh, what comfort have they in this! How is it sweetened to them, if in that condition they indeed follow him! Hast thou no dwelling of thy own, no possession, and little for present supply? Look up to Him who passed through here in that very same way, and cleave the closer to Him; so much the more eye Him as thy riches and portion, and thou needest not envy kings in their best days. And whatsoever be thy estate, how soon shall it be past! And all that live, have much a like space of earth to lie down in at last.

But Oh, the rich inheritance above, for all that lay hold on it, and follow our Lord Jesus Christ by the way!

Ver. 21. *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*] Now the other craves a delay. And a world of such excuses there are. They that will not give Christ an absolute refusal, yet have somewhat first to be done. This match, or bargain, or purchase, or at least a time civilly to take farewell of friends; and thus the most shift it off. But as to those whom he resolves to have, he will not take their refusal. *Let the dead*, says he, *bury their dead*. There are enough of common persons, who have no share of life in me, they may do that; *Follow thou me*. Oh! happy they whom he will not loose; whom he powerfully, yet sweetly constrains to break from all and follow him! Sure I am, it shall never repent them.

Ver. 23—27. *And being entered into a ship, there arose a great tempest.*] Still new occasions, and accordingly, new evidence, of the Divine power of Jesus Christ. Upon the ship wherein He is, there may, and usually does arise a storm; yet, happy is it to be embarked with Him upon all hazards! His ship may be tost, but perish it cannot. His counsels are deep and wise, and we cannot find them out. He knows what He is about to do, when we can least understand Him. When we think that He leads out His people to be swallowed up in the sea, or destroyed in the wilderness, He is only raising a mount for Himself to be seen on, and bringing them into the view of dangers, yea, of apparent ruin, to be more glorious in their deliverance. *His way is in the deep, and His footsteps are not known. Canst thou by searching find out God?* says He in Job. Which is not, I conceive, so much meant of His essence, as of His operations and ways; which are so profound and untraceable. We are at a stand often to think what he means to do; whether he has given up His Church and cause to the winds and waves, when His enemies rage and roar, and He is silent, as if He cared not what became of all. The seas swell, the ship is tost, and He sleeps.

Not to speak here of Christ putting on our natural frailties, or of this sleep, whether it was natural or voluntary; it might be and likely was both: wearied with the concourse of the multitude on the land, he falls asleep in the ship; yet, doubtless, he had the command of those natural inclinations in himself, and chooses now to sleep, to increase the appearance of the danger, and add horror to the visage of it. So no doubt it did: not all the blustering of the winds, nor the rising of the waves, was so frightful and sad to the disciples, as that their Master slept so sound in the midst of them; so sound as if rocked asleep by them, and either wholly insensible, or very regardless of their danger: as St. Luke expresses their feelings, *Carest thou not that we perish?* Now, in this man who slept, dwelt God who sleeps not, *The Watchman of Israel*, who does not so much as *slumber*. But they, either not so clearly understanding, or, in the fright, not so duly remembering and considering this, were eyeing only the posture wherein he was visible to them; therefore, the sounder he slept, it awaked and increased their fear the more. And as Jesus Christ here really did, even so God seems sometimes to His own to do; and they express it so. Thus the Psalmist: *Awake, arise, why sleepest Thou,*

O Lord? This He seems to do, when the ungodly prosper, and when His people lie trodden under foot, and He seems to take no notice of their pressure, nor stirs for their deliverance. And this is the saddest part of their affliction; they have no hope nor stay, but in the favour and protection of their God: now when that is retired, and the curtain drawn, and He asleep, their prayers not heard, and no appearance of His help, I say, it is a grand trial of faith, which shakes and disquiets more than all other things, how terrible soever. No rage or noise of the enemy is so grievous as the silence and sleeping of God. Thus, in a soul, when lusts and temptations are swelling and raging, and God is retired, and as asleep to it, says nothing, controls them not, but suffers them to take their course; this is that which breeds the highest anguish, and brings a soul to the mouth of the pit, to the brink of desperation. Then it is forced to cry for a word from his mouth: Lord Jesus, speak but a word; keep not silence to me, or I am undone; there is no recovery for me; if thou keep silence, I am dead: *I shall be like them that go down to the pit;* or, as it is here, *Save, Master, or we perish.*

And this is one main end for which he does sleep, to awake us, to rouse and stir our prayers, which commonly are, in times of ease, heavy, drowsy, lifeless things, as a man's speech in sleep, dreaming, incoherent, senseless stuff. This they may be to God, who hearkens to what the heart says in them, though to man's ears, the words may be fit and good sense. But by the straining of a sharp affliction, or near pressing danger, the heart is awaked and speaks itself. Such a word seems to sound in its ears, as that of the mariners to Jonah, *Arise, thou sluggard, and call upon thy God.* Men do but trifle in fair weather, but in the storm they are more in earnest. Especially, a soul acquainted with God, that follows and relies upon Him, will take this course and no other: it runs straight to Him, and if He be asleep, awakes Him. And in this they are to be approved and commended, that, as here, their course is to Jesus Christ, as confident of his power and willingness to deliver them. This the disciples did believe; otherwise they had not left working for themselves, to go to awake him.

Yet was there with their faith, a mixture of distempered, distrustful fear, which Jesus well knew, and which he would not otherwise have charged them with. He doth not altogether deny that there was faith in them, but checks the deficiency of it: *O ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?* Apprehend danger and fear, they might; yea, if they had not, they would not have come to Christ in that manner. Without a living sense of distress or danger, there can be neither faith nor prayer. These are stirred up and raised to act, by the knowledge and feeling of our need of help. But the misery is, we scarcely in any thing know our bounds: our passions raised, do usually overflow and pass the banks. A little fear does but awake faith, but much fear weakens it, and in the awakening gives it too great a blow, such a one as astonishes it, and makes it stagger. That they were afraid, was tolerable; but their hearts, it seems, were not so established in the persuasion of Christ's Divine power and care of them, as became them; and this he plainly, yet gently, checks. And there is this

alloy of distrust with believing, not only in the weaker, but even in the strongest Christian; and there is a continual wrestling betwixt them; sometimes the one is uppermost, and sometimes the other; but faith, in the end, shall have the victory. See what strange difference there was betwixt Job and Job:—Would one think it were the same person?—one while cursing his birth, and wishing for death, and yet, afterwards declaring, *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.* And again, afterwards, complaining, *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thy enemy?* And yet anon, again, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* This they should think of, who doubt because they doubt, and multiply distrust upon itself, concluding that they have no faith, because they find so much and so frequent doubting within them. But this is a great mistake. Some doubtings there may be, where there is even much faith; and a little faith there may be, where there is much doubting. But, upon this account, is doubting by any means to be entertained or favoured? Yea, it is to be hated and opposed with all our strength, and the strength of God must be implored to overcome it, as the grand enemy of our peace and His glory. By all means is faith to be cherished, and distrust to be checked. Our Saviour pardons it in his disciples, yet he blames it. He refuses not his help, yet he blames their unbelief. *O ye of little faith!* He requires, and delights in a strong, firm believing on him, though the least and weakest he rejects not.

Having first rebuked their fear, he rebukes the storm that caused it, and makes a calm, *a great calm.* No wonder that they wondered at it: though they had seen many of his works, and were now expecting somewhat of this from him, yet it surpasses their expectation, and strikes them into admiration, to see a man, a man subject to weariness and sleep, and yet, that man awaking to still the wind and seas with the word of his mouth. Oh! the greatness of the Lord whom we serve, the sovereign of sea and land, commanding all with a word, desperate diseases, blasting winds, raging seas, and tormenting devils!

And there was a great calm.—This often happens in his Church, after such storms as threatened shipwreck. And so in a soul, when all within (and these are the worst storms) is full of confusion and noises, the heart working like a troubled sea, and finding no rest, neither from its own persuasions, nor the skilfullest speeches of others, but, amidst all, likely to be swallowed up or split in pieces; then, then, one word from Christ's mouth quiets all presently, and makes the soul calmer and smoother than the stillest water in the fairest day. Oh, what wonder and love will possess the soul that hath found any such thing!

Ver. 28—34. *And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils.*] The following history hath many things of very useful remark; but those things offer themselves to all that read it. We may see the great malice of Satan, and the great power and goodness of Jesus Christ, and the great baseness and brutishness of the men of this place, here spoken of. Satan's malice appears in the men possessed, carrying them to run wild amongst tombs, and to commit outrage upon them

who passed by, and then, apprehending their dispossession thence, to desire to go into the swine of that place, and destroying them, which was their design upon the men, as the event proved. He who had the power, and graciously used it, to cast them out of the possessed men, was not tied to their suit as a point of capitulation. He could have cast them quite out of their coasts, and sent them back immediately to their own prison; but in Divine wisdom and justice, he grants their suit, knowing well what use they would make of it, and what would follow.

But Oh! the Gadarenes themselves were the swine, viler than those the devils entered and drowned; yea, they were worse possessed than the swine, and drowned in a more fearful deep, by the craft of those devils. And that was their plot. The devils, knowing how fast the hearts of the owners were linked to their swine, thought it likely that the swine being drowned, they would follow, would drown themselves in the rejecting of Jesus Christ. And they did so. How many who read or hear this with indignation, yet, possibly, do little better in their hearts,—cleaving to their herds, or other goods, gains, or pleasures, or any thing of this earth, and in the love of these, refusing Jesus Christ! Think it not a harsh word, but take heed ye be not such; for of the multitudes to whom Christ is offered, there are very few whose hearts do really open to him, and receive him. But Oh, happy they that do! This was the clearest instance of perfect misery, and yet, they were scarcely at all to be pitied, being the choosers and devisers of it themselves: *They besought Jesus to depart*, that is, besought life and blessedness to go from them. And what does a sinner, when he turns out and rejects motions and inspirations of holiness, lest his lusts and pleasures of sin should be lost, but dismiss Jesus, lest the swine should be drowned?

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

He who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, and commands them, (as ch. viii. v. 26.) is ferried over in some boat or small vessel. And was it not richly laden with this inestimable Pearl, *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all fulness* dwelling in Him? All the rich ships from both the Indies, were not to be compared to this.

Ver. 2. *And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy.*] The other Evangelists tell with what difficulty they did so, and how they overcame that difficulty with resolution and industry, which indeed overcome all. A strong bent towards Jesus Christ will not be hindered. Nor is their violence in uncovering the house, or their rudeness in interrupting his discourse, rejected or reproved, but all is accepted for the principle, *faith*, which was tempered with love to the sick, and even to Jesus Christ, as the person from whom they expected the cure.

And Jesus, seeing their faith]—It is needless to dispute that one may be benefited by the influence of another's faith. Surely, much may be done by it. Thus, it may bring and present a person, may recommend, may pray for him, and may be respected in the grant of mercy, not only in temporals, but in spirituals. But yet, *the just* lives only *by his* own *faith*, which no doubt this poor man had. For the word, *theirs*, excludes not, but rather includes the sick man's, who no doubt consented to this course in the same confidence. But yet, it is good to be in believing people's company. Another person, a family, a city, a society, may fare the better for the faith of an individual. Often, one who prays in a family, averts judgments, and draws down blessings upon the whole.

—*Said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*] This, though not appearing to be the errand, was yet the most important part of the cure, the root of blessings and blessedness, removing the root of all care and misery. Whether the sick man did most of all, or did at all desire, or expect this at the hands of Jesus Christ, we cannot tell; but if he thought not of it, (and we see no other,) Oh, what a surprise of love! It is good, coming to Jesus on any terms, on any errand. Some come, driven by outward afflictions, and yet return delivered from sin and eternal death. In this respect, there is great variety in this matter of declaring a pardon. Some seek and knock, and wait long, and hear it not. Others are prevented, who scarcely sought it, but Christ's first word to them is this. But all is one as to the main: they who seek it with sorrow, shall be sure to find it with joy; and they who first find it without previous sorrow, shall yet be sure to find that sorrow for sin, in some measure, likewise, after pardon, if not before. And truly it seems sweetest and kindliest, when mercy melts the heart. But well may He say, *Be of good courage*, who could add this, *Thy sins be forgiven thee.* Oh! what can dismay after this? The heart, wholly filled with divine peace and love, bears up all, and sorrow is turned into joy before a soul thus assured. Jesus knew well, that the healing of his palsy, without this pardon, had been but a lame cure, only the half, and the far less, the meaner half. This was the main business that brought him down from Heaven to be a man, and to dwell among men, and that made him die for man; that which nailed him to the cross, and drew forth his heart's blood: it was for the remission of the sins of many. These cures of bodily diseases, though clear demonstrations of Christ's Divine power and goodness, were but a transient appendage and symbol of that mainly intended and highest mercy, *the forgiveness of sins.*

The sentence of eternal death standing in full force above the head of an unpardoned sinner, if it were lively apprehended, Oh! what a paralytic trembling would it strike the soul into, causing the joints of it to shake and smite one upon another, in the midst of its fullest health and mirth, as the hand-writing on the wall did that drunken king Belshazzar. But we know not what sin is, though we hear and speak of it, and sometimes confess it; and therefore our hearts leap not at the report of a pardon, though we hear of it, and usually entreat it. Any of you, when complaining that you are robbed, or spoiled of your

goods, would scarcely think it to the purpose were I to tell you, *Your sins are pardoned.* But oh! how fit a word it is to answer and drown all griefs; so pertinent that nothing besides it is so! And happy that soul that hears it from His mouth who gives it, and who alone can ascertain it. This is the answer that will satisfy. If thou sayest, "I am diseased;" ay, but thy sin is pardoned. "I am poor;" ay, but thy sin is pardoned. And surely, a soul that heeds it right, will be quieted, and will be bold, *of good courage*, as the word here is, and will embrace all other burdens, and go light under them; will say, Lord, now let me live, or let me die, let me abound or want, let me be healthy or sick, take away what thou wilt, or lay on what thou wilt, all is well; Thou hast pardoned my sin.

Ver. 3. *And behold certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*] Supposing Jesus but a man, yet, there was no necessity for this construction. He was a holy man, a singular, extraordinary man, doing unparalleled miracles; and he said not, *I forgive thy sins*, but, *Thy sins are forgiven thee;* which was a word not beyond the capacity of a prophetical power to say it declaratively. And though there was an air of authority, might they not have thought, This may be the Messiah, who they knew was to come, and was to be the Son of God, and to bring remission of sins along with him? But that base spirit, the spirit of envy, with which they were filled, willingly rejects all better sort of constructions, and fastens on the absolutely worst it can invent. To an eye that looks through the dark glass of prejudice and malice, all is discoloured. Yet they are struck with so much awe, that they dare not speak it out. That which struck them was, they were obscured by his brightness. They were *animalia gloriæ*, as one calls the philosophers, and could not endure to go less in the opinion they had gained: a sore mischief, and one much attaching to known and venerable possession. *Genus irritabile vatum.*

But a spirit devoted to HIM whose due all glory is, willingly resigns it to Him, in what way He will. Let whoso will be best or chief, so that still He be chief of all, and glorified in all. The holy Baptist had another spirit than these rabbies: he told it freely and gladly, *He must increase, but I must decrease.* It was his end, as the morning star is willingly drowned in the brightness of the rising sun.

Ver. 4. *And Jesus knowing their thoughts.*] This, without any thing further, was clearly enough to demonstrate his Divine power. Oh! that this was ever in our thoughts, that all our thoughts are under his eye! If they were so, and we knew them to be so, to some grave, wise man, how wary, and choice should we be of them! And shall we have less regard to the holiest and wisest Lord, to whom they are all naked and open?

Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?] There was no reason in the thing, but the reason was, their hearts were evil, and their emissions like themselves. An evil heart is an incessant forge of evil thoughts. It is a corrupt spring still issuing forth, and till it be renewed, it cannot find any other. *From the heart come evil thoughts:* that is in the front of all the black train that comes forth of the heart, as our Saviour teaches, Matt. xv. 19. These are the seeds of all the wickedness that fills the world. Chief regard, therefore, is to be had to the *heart.* An excellent advice that of Solomon, *Keep thy heart*

with all diligence. To amend some evil customs, without the renewing of the heart, is but to lop the branches that will grow again, or others in their stead; but a holy heart meditates on holy things, is still in heaven, is all reverence towards God, and meekness and charity to men.

Ver. 5. *Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk?*] Though the remission of sins flows originally from the same power, and so is equal, and in its own place hath the preference, being by far the greater mercy, yet, the other of bodily cure runs into the senses, and so both is more evident to the beholders, and affects them more. The other word might be spoken with less control, the efficacy or inefficacy of it not falling under the cognition of them that heard it; but this of healing the palsy, would either be attested or denied in the effect.

Ver. 6. *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*] Now he asserts a peculiar power of forgiving sin. Though a man walking on the earth as the rest, yet, in testimony of the Divine power, *He saith to the sick of the palsy,*—this apostrophe maketh the proof more lively, joining presently the real experiment of that miraculous cure,—*Arise, take up thy bed.* That word which gave being to the world, what is hard to it? And in the case of spiritual deadness, soul-palsy, no more is necessary than a word from His mouth, and it shall be lively and strong; it shall skip and *leap.* Is. xxxv. 6. Lord, speak that word! And indeed, wheresoever he pardons sin, He withal makes the soul able and nimble, to *run in the way of His commandments;* to carry its head, that before carried it; to command and wield at pleasure those low things wherein it rested.

Ver. 8. *But when the multitude saw it they marvelled.*] *They feared,* says St. Luke. A gracious work it was, yet so full of wonder, that it struck them with a kind of fear. *And they glorified God.* Thus shall he break out, and shine bright in His works, when most opposed by evil men. Yet they knew him not well, but took him for an extraordinary man only. But thus he was pleased to be known by degrees, and to rise as the morning light. It is a common presumption, and generally that of the least knowing, to think that they have the true and full sense of the articles of religion; and that presumption is commonly accompanied with this precipitancy, that we would constrain all to know and believe, at once, without delay, whatsoever we think and believe. *Who had given such power unto men.* But had they known this honour given unto men, that this man was God, they would have wondered much more. And if he was so astonishingly wonderful in healing a sick man, how wonderful shall he be in raising the dead! And if in his lowness, his power was admired, how much more shall all admire that power which shall then be given him, when the *man, Christ,* shall come in the brightness of his glory, to judge the world!

Ver. 9. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom.*] He staid no long time upon earth, but he lost no part of that time. Every step to us is a wonder of goodness. And here is a cure which the Evangelist ingenuously relates as done upon himself, which was no less, if not

more wonderful, than that performed upon the paralytic; and done as easily and quickly by the same means, a word spoken.

He saw a man named Matthew. He loves first, and spies first, when we think on nothing less than him; as he says to Nathanael: *Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* And this seeing of Matthew was no casual, but a designed sight, proceeding from a former sight, like unto that of Nathanael; and is the sight of his fore-knowing and fore-choosing love. So even this very sight of his calling and converting power did prevent Matthew, while he thought of no such thing, and would have let Jesus pass, being so intent upon his busy employment, as either not to have seen him at all, or to have taken no notice of him.

Sitting at the receipt of custom. This is the common case, the posture of called sinners. While they are thinking of no such thing, but altogether drowned in other desires and cares, (even at the church, their hearts are often more in their shops, or fields, or any earthly business they are engaged in,) their very hearts being a little custom-house, such a crowd and noise of cares and vanities, as there is usually of people in a custom-house, He who hath their names in His book of life, at His appointed time glances at them, by a powerful look cast on them, and, by a word spoken to them, draws them to Himself; and that without minding any previous worth or congruous disposition in them, more than in others; yea, finding them in a more indisposed temper and posture, possibly, than many others who are not called, as the Evangelist here freely and humbly declares of himself, speaking out his calling, and his busy diligence in it, in the very instant that he is called from it. Observe, likewise, his expressing of his common name, Matthew; whereas the other Evangelist, in the recital of this story, gives him that other name which was the more honourable, Levi. *Sitting at the receipt of custom*, a profession of great gain, but little credit among the Jews; and though, possibly, not utterly unlawful in the nature of it, yet, so generally corrupt in the exercise and management of it; like some other callings, which, though a man cannot absolutely determine them to be unlawful, are yet seldom or never lawfully and spotlessly discharged. Therefore, the Jews shunned the very society of publicans (tax-gatherers) as a wicked, execrable kind of men, and did in a manner necessitate them to converse with the worst sort of persons, as being expelled and generally avoided by all others; so that you find them here, ver. 10, and usually in the Gospel, linked together, *publicans* and *sinners*, that is, noted, nefarious sinners, such as harlots, and other scandalously vicious persons. Yet from this stained and ill-reputed calling, is Matthew called by the holy Lord, to follow him. As he called poor fishermen, and made them *fishers of men*, to catch men, to save them by their net spread, the word of life preached, so he calls a rich publican to be a gatherer-in of his tribute and treasure in the world, the souls of chosen sinners, by the publication of the Gospel.

No rank of men is so low, as to be below the condescension of His choice and grace; and none are so remote, in the reputed or real iniquity of their station or person, as to be without the extent and reach of His saving hand. And He is pleased to give instances of this in choosing whom He will, and making them what He will, that *no*

flesh may glory before him, but that all flesh may glorify Him, whom no unworthiness or unfitness can prejudice, either in the freedom of His grace in choosing them, or in the power of His grace in changing the mind and fitting them for what He calls them to. He hath no need, nor takes notice of our rules, nor judges according to our thoughts. Not only have we here a publican, but afterwards a persecutor, made a most eminent preacher and apostle of Jesus Christ. And His choice and calling wipes out the stain of all preceding sin, though the persons themselves do readily acknowledge it on all occasions, as St. Paul often does, and St. Matthew does here. And indeed it is sincerity and humility for them who are converted, at a great distance of time so to do. But for others to object to them after their conversion, either the meanness or the sinfulness of their former lives, were great uncharity and folly: it were to reckon up to men that which God hath blotted out, who alone is interested in the account.

Herein God is wonderful, who seizeth on some persons in the midst of youthful dissipations, or violent pursuits of the world, and purifies them for Himself; makes them not only vessels of honour, but of the first rank, to bear His name to others; makes them eminently holy, gives them great abilities, and, which is the top of all abilities, ardent love, and mighty affection for His service. His spirit, that holy fire, refines gross earth into the pureness of transparent glass, to be the inlet of light to His people.

Now, why is this one taken from the custom-house, and so many others left, both there and elsewhere, round about him? This is *arcanum imperii*, a *state secret:* no reason is to be expected but His good pleasure. Why is such a poor creature in a cottage chosen, and great palaces passed by? Why are simple and unlettered persons taught the mysteries of Heaven, and great wits left to evaporate themselves upon vain loves, and other like follies? Why in the same house is one chosen and called, and it may be a servant, and the rest passed by? Nothing can be given in answer but this: *Even so, Father, because it pleaseth Thee.*

And he saith unto him, Follow me.] I am not of the mind of a grave interpreter who thinks there were other words added to persuade him, though not related. I am somewhat confident that there was no more said at all, this being our Saviour's usual word of calling others in the same way, and so powerful a word, and of such mighty influence, that there was no resisting it. *He arose, and followed him.* No chains so strong to hold an earthly mind, as those of gold and silver. He was here in the midst of them, and very heavy ones they were, no doubt; yet, the word makes the soul break loose with a marvellous force from all. Some apprehend, (as well they may,) there was an attractive power in the amiable Jesus who here called him; but surely the word had of His Divine power in it, and reached the heart, and could not be resisted, and drew more strongly than all the receipts, and gains, and involved business of his profession, which could not hold him back. So Elijah but cast his mantle upon Elisha in passing, and he followed. *What have I done to thee?* said he. Nothing to look at, yet enough to constrain him to leave all and follow him. So it is in the conversion of any sinners; no weights nor bolts

can hold them: they must follow a commanding word, such as that which, in the creation, causes that to be that it commands; a magnetic touch of Jesus Christ, speaking in a word to the heart, so that it must follow him. Oh! happy souls that have felt it!

Ver. 10—13. *And as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with him and his disciples.* The other Evangelists tell that it was in Matthew's house, and at a great feast which he made; this himself does not mention. This feast he made both as a respectful entertainment to his new Master, and as a civil farewell to his old friends, and fellow publicans: and possibly he took the confidence to invite them together with Jesus Christ, hoping that his presence and company might have likewise some happy influence upon some of them; and it is likely divers of them came uninvited, out of a desire to see Jesus, having heard of this his sudden and powerful withdrawing of one who, no doubt, was a prime man amongst them. However, the mild and gracious Jesus refuses neither the feast nor the company, condescending to the most ordinary customs of life, and in these things affecting nothing of austerity and singularity; and he chose this compliant way as most suitable to his design: *He became like us in all things, excepting sin.*

But all along, the spirit of pharisaical envy follows him, and lies at the catch for an advantage. Here it seemed fair for them. They accost not himself with it, but his disciples, hoping more easily to unsettle them of their opinion of their Master: How is this? He calls you to follow him as to some eminent way of sanctity, and leads you unto feasting and good cheer, and that with the refuse and impurest sort of men, *publicans and sinners.* Jesus takes on him the answer, as alone able to give it home. Why? What wonder you to see me in such company? Why, where should a man be, but where his business lies? Were it strange to find a physician in a hospital or infirmary, or any where amongst the sick? Here is my work and great employment; and you might have read a word applicable to this purpose: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice;* that is, rather than sacrifice, or any ceremonial observance, such as this you urge, of abhorring the society of such persons, substantial goodness and duties of compassion and love. And instead of squinting on what you see, go think on this. You have read it likely, but do not well understand it; study better what it means. Meanwhile know this, that I am prosecuting the great design of my coming into the world, while I am in such company. *I came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Not the righteous; either them that conceit themselves such, as you do, or any that are really converted already and religious. My present business is not so much with them, as to restore the ungodly, *to call sinners to repentance.*

I will not now speak of the rules and qualifications of using or avoiding the converse of unholy persons; but doubtless, there lies much, we shall find, as in this instance, in the due consideration of the persons on both sides, what hope there may be of reclaiming them, and what safety of not being corrupted by them, lest, while we think to pull them out of the mire, they drag us into it. Here there was none of that danger at all, and there was the highest power for converting; and the persons, even by coming so willingly where he was, seem not to have

been the most obstinate and incorrigible. But we should reflect well on ourselves in this case, that our intention be suitable to this, and that we be in some measure hopeful to be able to accomplish, before we attempt such a thing: otherways it will prove fool-hardiness, to adventure much of this kind.

But this is the great comfort of sinners, this word: *I came to call not the righteous, but sinners.* What can a diffident heart say, that it should not come to Jesus Christ? Art thou a sinner, an eminent sinner? Therefore come to him, for he came to thee. It is such that he comes to seek—they are the very objects of his grace. He had nothing else to do in the world but to save such; he came on purpose for their sakes. His very name tells it: *He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.* It is so far from being a just hinderance, that it is the only title to his favourable intentions, that thou art a sinner. Were it not strange if one should say, I am sick, very sick, therefore I will not make an address to the physician? And to say, I am a sinner, and a great one, therefore I dare not go to the Saviour of sinners, would be equally strange. Oh, no; therefore I will go: he came for me; I am sure he is able to heal me—ought to be the language of all such.

But though this is a great encouragement to sinners, it is no encouragement at all to sin. He came to call sinners, but it is to call them to repentance. This the whole gospel, and all the doctrine of grace, still presses. If thou bring thy sins to Jesus Christ, as thy malady and misery, to be cured of them, and delivered from them, it is well; but to come with them as thy beloved darlings and delight, thinking still to retain them and receive him, thou mistakest him grossly, and miserably deludest thyself. He came forth from God, to restore souls to God, in order to make us *partakers* of his *Divine nature.* The great intendment of the blessed Jesus, and the great redemption he wrought, is, to separate our hearts and sin. We know him not, if we take it otherways. And this says clearly, that though he hath come to us, and stretched forth his hands long amongst us, few of us are come to him. Oh! how few have trod on the neck of their beloved sin, to come to Jesus Christ! This is the great, deplorable wretchedness of the land: not the losses and ravages of war; not the loss of civil liberty, or any thing else that way; this is it—Unrepentance. We turn not by being smitten with the sharpest rod: we turned not by being invited with tender mercies. Look on such as have been suffering at home, or wandering abroad; what change has been wrought on our hearts? What imports who do, or do not, rule over us, while our unworthy lusts and passions still do? If spoiled and poor, and without Christ too, then we are poor indeed; Oh, pitiful poor! Yea, if thou escape many things that light sadly on others, yet, if thou hast not escaped the dominion of sin, and that curse of death that cleaves to it, Oh, wretched caitiff! Think what Jesus came and died for,—what we live for,—and what is our great business on this earth—that our sins should die before us. He came to call the earthly to heavenly-mindedness and heavenly conversation;—to call the unclean to purity;—to call the passionate and furious to meekness;—to call the proud to humility. Oh, answer this call. Give Him the desire of His heart, and He will certainly give thee thine.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

PREFACE.

MANY and great are the evils that lodge within the heart of man, and they come forth abundantly both by the tongue and by the hand, yet the heart is not emptied of them; yea, the more it vents them outwardly, the more they increase within. Well might HE who knows the heart so well, call it an *evil treasure*. We find the prophet Ezekiel, in his eighth chapter, led by the Lord in vision to Jerusalem, to view the sins of the Jews who remained there in the time of the captivity: when He had shewed him one abomination, He caused him to dig through the wall, to enter and discover more, and so directed him several times, from one place to another, and still said, *I will shew thee yet greater abominations*. Thus is it with those whom the Lord leads into an examination of their own hearts, (for men are usually strangers to themselves,) by the light of His word, and His Spirit going before them; He lets them see heaps of abominations in every room, and the vilest in the most retired and darkest corners. And truly, should He leave them there, they would despair of remedy. No; He makes this discovery on purpose that they should sue to Him for help. Do so, then, as many of you as have taken any notice of the evils of your own hearts. Tell the Lord, those hearts are His own work: *He formed the heart of man within him*. And they are his own choice too: *My son, give me thy heart*. Entreat Him to redress all those abuses wherewith Satan and sin have filled it, and then to take possession of it Himself, for therein consists its happiness. This is, or should be, a main end of our resortings to His house and service. Wrong not yourselves so far as to turn these serious exercises of religion into an idle divertisement. What a happiness were it, if every time you come to His solemn worship, some of your strongest sins did receive a new wound, and some of your weakest graces a new strength!

JAMES iii. 17.

But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

God doth know, that in the day that ye shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil, was the first hissing of that old Serpent, by which he poisoned mankind in the root. Man, not contented with the impression of God's image, in which he was created, lost it by catching at a shadow. Climbing higher than his station, he fell far below it: seeking to be more than man, to become as God, he made himself less than man. *He lodged*

not a night in honour, but became as the beasts that perish. Ps. xlix. 12. Ever since, nature's best wisdom is full of impurity, turbulency, and distemper; nor can anything rectify it, but a *wisdom from above*, that both cleanseth and composeth the soul: *it is first pure, and then peaceable.*

This Epistle, as some that follow, is called *General*, both by reason of the dispersion of the parties to whom it is addressed, and the universality of the subject which it treats; containing a great number (if not all) of the necessary directions and comforts of a Christian's life, both for the active and the passive part of it. It is evident that the Apostle's main design is, to arm the dispersed Jews against all kinds of temptations,—both those of *affliction*, in the first chapter, at the 2nd verse, and *sinful temptations*, verse 13th. And having discoursed of two special means of strengthening them against both—*speaking to God in prayer*, and *hearing God speak in His word*—in the two last verses of that first chapter, he recommends, as chief duties of religion, and sure evidences of integrity in religion, first, *meekness* and *moderation*, chiefly in their *speeches*, and then, *charity* and *purity* in their *actions;* insisting largely upon the latter, in the second chapter, and upon the former, the ruling of the *tongue*, in this third chapter: and here, towards the end of it, he shews the true opposite springs of miscarriage in speech and action, and of right ordering and regulating of both. Evil conversation, strifes and envyings are the fruits of a base wisdom that is *earthly*, *sensual*, and *devilish*, ver. 15th; but *purity*, *meekness*, and *mercy*, are the proper effects and certain signs of heavenly wisdom.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure: its gentleness can agree with anything except *impurity*. Then it is *peaceable*—it offends nobody, except *purity* offend them. It is not raging and boisterous. It is not only *pure*, being void of that mire and dirt which the wicked are said to cast out like the sea (Isa. lvii. 20), but *peaceable* likewise, not swelling, and restless like the sea, as is there said of the wicked. Nor is it only *peaceable* negatively, *not offending*, but as the word bears [εἰρηνική] *pacific*, disposed to make and seek peace. And as it readily offends none, so it is not easily offended. It is *gentle* and *moderate*, [ἐπιεικῆς,] and if offended, [εὐπειθής,] *easily entreated* to forgive. And as it easily passeth by men's offences, so it doth not pass by, but looks upon their distresses and wants,—as full of compassion as it is free from unruly and distempered passions. Nor rests it in an affecting sympathy; its *mercy* is helpful—*full of mercy and good fruits*. And it both forgives, and pities, and gives, *without partiality, and without hypocrisy:* [ἀδιάκριτος καὶ ἀνυπόκριτος.] The word ἀδιάκριτος may as well bear another sense, no less suiting both with this wisdom and these its other qualities; that is, *not taking upon it a censorious discerning and judging of others.* They that have most of this wisdom, are least rigid to those that have less of it. I know no better evidence of strength in grace, than to bear much with those that are weak in it. And lastly, as it spares the infirmities of others, so it makes not false and vain shows of its own excellencies; it is *without hypocrisy*. This denies two things, both *dissimulation* and *ostentation*. The art of *dissembling*, or *hypocrite-craft*, is no part of this wisdom. And for

the other, *ostentation*, surely the air of applause is too light a purchase for solid wisdom. The works of this wisdom may be seen, yea, they should be seen, and may possibly be now and then commended; but they should not be done for that low end, either to be seen or to be commended. Surely not, being of so noble extraction. This wisdom having descended from Heaven, will be little careful for the estimation of those that are of the earth, and are but too often of the earth, earthly.

The due order of handling these particulars more fully cannot well be missed. Doubtless, the *subject, (wisdom from above)*, requires our first consideration; next, the *excellent qualities* that are attributed to it; and lastly, their *order* is to be considered, the rather because so clearly expressed, *first pure, then peaceable*, &c.

Wisdom from above.] There be two things in that: there is the general term of *wisdom*, common to divers sorts of wisdom, though most eminently and truly belonging to this best wisdom; then there is the *birth* or *original* of this wisdom, serving as its difference to specify and distinguish it from all the rest—*wisdom from above.* Wisdom, in the general, is a very plausible word among men. Who is there that would not willingly pass for wise? Yea, often those that are least of all such, are most desirous to be accounted such; and where this fails them, they usually make up that want in their own conceit and strong opinion. Nor do men only thus love the reputation of wisdom, but they naturally desire to be wise, as they do to be happy: yet, through corrupt nature's blindness, they do as naturally mistake and fall short both of the one and the other; and being once wrong, the more progress they make, they are further out of the way, and pretending to wisdom in a false way, they still befool themselves, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. i. 22: φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωρανθησαν. *Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.*

Our Apostle, ver. 15, speaking of that wicked wisdom that is fruitful of wrongs, strifes, and debates, and that is only abusively to be called *wisdom*, shews what kind of wisdom it is, by three notable characters, *earthly, natural,* and *devilish;* which though they be here jointly attributed to one and the same subject, yet we may make use of them to signify some differences of false wisdom. There is an *infernal*, or *devilish wisdom*, proper for contriving cruelties and oppressions, or subtle shifts and deceits that make atheism a main basis and pillar of state policy: such as those *that devise mischief upon their beds*, &c. Mic. ii. 1. This is a *serpentine wisdom*, not joined with, but most opposite to the *dove-like simplicity*. There is an *earthly wisdom* that draws not so deep in impiety as that other, yet is sufficient to keep a man out of all acquaintance with God and Divine matters, and is drawing his eye perpetually downwards, employing him in the pursuit of such things as cannot fill the soul, except it be with anguish and vexation. *By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches.* Ezek. xxviii. 5. That dexterity of gathering riches, where it is not attended with the Christian art of rightly using them, abases men's souls, and indisposes them wholly for this *wisdom that is from above.* There is a *natural wisdom* far more plausible than the other two, more harmless than that hellish wisdom, and more refined than that earthly wisdom,

yet no more able to make man holy and happy than they are: *Natural*, ψυχικὴ, it is the word the Apostle St. Paul useth. 1 Cor. ii. ἄνθρωπος ψυχικος, naming the *natural man* by his better part, his soul: intimating that the soul, even in the highest faculty of it, the understanding, and that in the highest pitch of excellency to which nature can raise it, is blind in spiritual objects. Things that are above, cannot be known but by a *wisdom from above*. Nature neither affords this wisdom, nor can it of itself acquire it. This is to advertise us, that we mistake not *morality and common knowledge*, even of Divine things, for *the wisdom that is from above*. That may raise a man high above the vulgar, as the tops of the highest mountains leave the valleys below them; yet is it still as far short of true supernatural wisdom, as the highest earth is of the highest sphere. There is one main point of the method of this wisdom that is of most hard digestion to a natural man, and the more natural wise he be, the worse he likes it: *If any man would be wise, let him become a fool that he may become wise*. 1 Cor. iii. 18. There is nothing gives nature a greater prejudice against religion, than this initial point of self-denial. When men of eminent learning, or the strong politicians, hear that, if they will come to Christ, they must renounce their own wisdom to be fit for his, many of them go away as sorrowful as the young man when he heard of selling all his goods and giving them to the poor.

Jesus Christ is that eternal and substantial Wisdom that came from above, to deliver men from perishing in their affected folly, as you find it at large in Prov. viii. St. Paul, in the first chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, calls him *the wisdom of God*, ver. 24; that shews his excellency in himself: and ver. 30, he tells us that *He is made of God our wisdom:* that shews his usefulness to us. And by Him alone is this infused wisdom from above conveyed to us. *In Him are the hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3; and *from His fulness*, if at all, *we all receive grace for grace;* and of all graces, first some measures of this wisdom, without which no man can know himself, much less can he know God.

Now this supernatural wisdom hath in it both speculation and prudence; it is contemplative and practical: these two must not be separated. *I wisdom dwell with prudence*. Prov. viii. 12. This wisdom in its contemplative part, reads Christ much, and discovers in him a new world of hidden excellencies unknown to this old world. There are *treasures of wisdom in Him*, but they are *hid*, and no eye sees them, but that which is enlightened with thy wisdom. No, it is impossible, as one says (Sophocles), τὰ Θεια γνῶναι κρυπτοντος Θεοῦ, *to know Divine things while God concealeth them*. But when the renewed understanding of a Christian is once initiated into this study, it both grows daily more and more apprehensive, and Christ becomes more communicative of himself, and makes the soul more acquainted with the amiable countenance of his Father in him reconciled. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him*. John i. 18. What wonder if the unlettered and despised Christian knows more of the mysteries of Heaven, than the naturalist, though both wise and learned? Christ admits the believer into his bosom, and *He* is in the

bosom of the Father. But withal know, that all this knowledge, though speculatively high, yet descends to practice: as it learns what God is, so it thence teacheth man, what he should be. This wisdom flows from Heaven, and a heavenly conversation flows from it; as we find it there characterized by those practical graces of *purity*, *peace*, *meekness*, &c.

This wisdom represents to us, the *purity* of God's nature. 1 John iii. 3. It gives the soul an eye to see the comeliness and beauty of *purity:* as the philosopher said of virtue, to the end it might be loved, he would wish no more but that it could be seen. And as it thus morally persuades, so, by an insensible virtue, it assimilates the soul to Christ, by frequent contemplation. It also produces all the motives to holiness and obedience; it begets these precious qualities in the soul. It giveth a Christian a view of the matchless virtues that are in Christ, and stirs him up to a diligent, though imperfect imitation of them. It sets before us Christ's spotless *purity*, in whose mouth there was no guile, and so invites us to *purity*. It represents the perpetual calmness of His spirit, that no tempest could reach to disturb it: *In his mouth there was no contentious noise, his voice was not heard in the streets;* and this recommends *peaceableness*, and *gentleness*. And so in the rest here mentioned.

Hence, I conceive, may be fitly learned for our use, that seeing here is a due wisdom and knowledge necessary for guidance and direction in the ways of *purity* and *peace*, it is evident that gross ignorance cannot consist with the truth of religion, much less can it be a help and advantage to it. I shall never deny that a false, superstitious religion stands in need of it: "Not too much scripture wisdom for the people." The pomp of that vain religion, like court masks, shews best by candle-light. Fond nature likes it well: the day of spiritual wisdom would discover its imposture too clearly. But to let their foul devotion pass, (for such it must needs be that is born of so black a mother as ignorance,) let this *wisdom* at least be *justified of* those that pretend to be *her children*.. It is lamentable that amongst us, where knowledge is not withheld, men should, through sloth and love of darkness, deprive themselves of it. What abundance of almost brutish ignorance is amongst the commons! and thence arise uncleanness, and all manner of wickedness: a darkness that both hides and increaseth impurity. What is the reason of so much impiety and iniquity in all places, but the want of the knowledge of God? *Not knowing Jesus Christ*, and *not obeying his gospel*, are joined together. Hosea iv. 1, 2; 2 Thess. i. 8. It will be found true, that where there is no obedience, there is no right knowledge of Christ. But out of all question, where there is not a competency of knowledge, there can be no obedience. And as these two lodge together, so observe what attends them both. *He shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And if there be any that think to shroud unpunished amongst the thickets of ignorance, especially amidst the means of knowledge, take notice of this; though it may hide the deformity of sin from your own sight for a time, it cannot palliate it from the piercing eye, nor cover

it from the revenging hand of Divine Justice. As you would escape, then, that wrath to come, come to wisdom's school, and how simple soever ye be as to this world, if you would not perish with the world, learn to be *wise unto salvation.*

And truly, it is mainly important for this effect, that the ministers of the Gospel be active and dexterous in imparting this wisdom to their people. If they would have their conversation to be holy, and peaceable, and fruitful, &c., the most expedient way is at once to principle them well in the fundamentals of religion; for therein is their great defect. How can they walk evenly and regularly, so long as they are in the dark? One main thing is, to be often pointing at the way to Christ, the fountain of this wisdom. Without this, you bid them be clothed, and clothe them not.

How needful then is it, that pastors themselves be *Seers* indeed, as the prophets were called of old; not only faithful but *wise* dispensers, as our Saviour speaks, Luke xii. 42, that they be *διδακτικοὶ, able and apt to teach.* 1 Tim. iii. 2. Laudable is the prudence that tries much the churches' storehouses, the seminaries of learning; but withal, it is not to be forgot, that as a due furniture of learning is very requisite for this employment, so it is not sufficient. When one is duly enriched that way, there is yet one thing wanting, that grows not in schools; except this infused *wisdom from above* season and sanctify all other endowments, they remain *κοιναὶ*, common and unholy, and therefore unfit for the sanctuary. Amongst other weak pretences to Christ's favour in the last day, this is one, *We have preached in thy name;* yet says Christ, *I never knew you.* Surely, then, they knew not him, and yet they preached him. Cold and lifeless (though never so fine and well contrived) must those discourses be, that are of an *unkown Christ.* Pastors are called angels, and therefore, though they use the secondary helps of knowledge, they are mainly to bring their message from above, from the Fountain, the Head of this pure wisdom.

Pure.] If it come *from above*, it must needs be *pure originally;* yea, it is *formally pure* too, being a main trait of God's renewed image in the soul. By this wisdom, the understanding is both refined and strengthened to entertain right conceptions of God in His nature and works. And this is primarily necessary, that the mind be not infected with false opinions in religion. If the spring-head be polluted, the streams cannot be pure. This is more important than men usually think, for a good life. But that which I suppose to be here chiefly intended, is, that it is *effectively* and *practically pure: it purifies the heart,* (said of *Faith*, Acts xv. 9, which, in some sense and acceptation, differs not much from this wisdom,) and consequently, the words and actions that flow from the heart.

This *purity*, some render *chastity: The wisdom from above is chaste, ἁγνὴ.* The word is indeed often so taken, and includes that here, but it is too narrow a sense to restrict it to that only. It implies here, a universal detestation of all impurity, both of flesh and spirit, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Pride, self-love, profaneness of spirit, and irreligion, though they do not so properly pollute the body as carnal uncleanness, yet they do no less defile the

soul, and make it abominable in the sight of God. Those apostate angels called *unclean spirits*, are incapable of bodily defilement, though indeed they tempt and inveigle men to it; their own inherent pollutions must needs be spiritual, for they are spirits. *Idolatry*, in Scripture, goes often under the name of *fornication* and *adultery*; and indeed these sins may mutually borrow and lend their names the one to the other; idolatry may well be called *spiritual unchastity*, and unchaste love, *carnal idolatry*. Earthly-mindedness likewise is an impurity of the soul: in the Apostle's phrase, *covetousness* is *idolatry*, and so, a spiritual pollution; yea, it may well share with idolatry in its borrowed name, and be called adultery too, for it misbestows the soul's prime affection upon the creature, which right is God's peculiar due.

This purity that true wisdom works is contrary to all pollution. We know then in some measure *what* it is: it remains to inquire *where* it is; and there is the difficulty. It is far easier to describe it in itself, than to find it among men. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean?* Prov. xx. 9. Look upon the greatest part of mankind, and you may know at first sight, that purity is not to be looked for among them: they suffer it not to come near them, much less to dwell with them and within them; they hate the very semblance of it in others, and themselves delight in intemperance and all manner of licentiousness, like foolish children striving who shall go furthest into the mire. These cannot say, they have *made clean their hearts*, for all their words and actions will belie them. If you come to the mere moralist, the world's *honest man*, and ask him, it may be, he will tell you, he hath cleansed his heart; but believe him not. It will appear he is not yet cleansed, because he says he has done it himself; for (you know) there must be some other besides man at this work. Again, he rising no higher than nature, hath none of this heavenly *wisdom* in him, and therefore is without this *purity* too. But if you chance to take notice of some well-skilled hypocrite, every thing you meet with makes you almost confident, that *there* is purity; yet, if he be strictly put to it, he may make some good account of the pains he hath taken to refine his tongue and his public actions, but he dares not say he hath *made clean his heart:* it troubles his peace to be asked the question. He never intended to banish sin, but to retire it to his innermost and best room, that so it might dwell unseen within him; and where then should it lodge but in his heart? Yet, possibly, because what is outward is so fair, and man cannot look deeper to contradict him, he may embolden himself to say, he is inwardly suitable to his appearance; but there is a day at hand that shall, to his endless shame, at once discover both his secret impurity and his impudence in denying it.

After these, there follow a few despised and melancholy persons, (at least as to outward appearance,) who are almost always hanging down their heads, and complaining of abundant sinfulness. And surely, purity cannot be expected in these who are so far from it by their own confession; yet the truth is, that such purity as is here below, will either be found to lodge among these, or no where. Be not deceived; think not that they who loath, and (as they can) flee

from the unholiness of the world, are therefore taken with the conceit of their own holiness; but as their perfect purity of justification is by Christ's imputed righteousness, so likewise they will know, and do always acknowledge, that their inherent holiness is *from above* too, from the same fountain, Jesus Christ. The wisdom *from above* is pure; this is their engagement to humility, for it excludes vaunting and boasting; and besides that, it is imperfect, troubled and stained with sin, which is enough to keep them humble. Their daily sad experience will not suffer them to be so mistaken: their many faults of infirmity cannot but keep them from this presumptuous fault. There is *a generation*, indeed, *that are pure in their own eyes*, but they are such as *are not washed from their filth*. Prov. xxx. 12. They that are washed, are still bewailing that they again contract so much defilement. The most purified Christians are they that are most sensible of their impurity. Therefore I called not this a universal freedom from pollution, but a universal detestation of it. They that are thus pure, are daily defiled with many sins, but they cannot be in love with any sin at all, nor do they willingly dispense with the smallest sins, which a natural man either sees not to be sin, (though his dim moonlight discover grosser evils,) or, if he do see them, yet he judges it too much niceness to choose a great inconvenience rather than a little sin. Again, they differ in another particular: a natural man may be so far in love with virtue after his manner, as to dislike his own faults and resolve to amend them; but yet, he would think it a great weakness to sit down and mourn for sin, *and to afflict his soul*, as the Scripture speaks. The Christian's repentance goes not so lightly; there is a great deal more work in it. There is not only *indignation* against impurity, but it proceeds to *revenge*. 2 Cor. vii. 11. The saints we read of in Scripture, were ashamed of their impurity, but never of their tears for it. Let the world enjoy their own thoughts, and account it folly, yet surely, the Christian who delights in purity, seeing he cannot be free from daily sin, when he retires himself at night, is then best contented when his eyes serve him most plentifully to weep out the stains of the by-past day; yet he knows withal, that it is only his Redeemer's blood that takes away the guilt of them. This is the condition of those that are truly, though not yet fully, cleansed from the pollutions of the world by the Spirit of wisdom and purity. What mean they, then, who would argue themselves out of this number, because they find yet much dross left, and that they are not so defecated and refined as they would wish to be? On the contrary, this hatred of pollution testifies strongly that the contrary of it, *purity*, is there; and though its beginnings be small, doubt not, it shall in the end be victorious. The *smoking* of this *flax* shews indeed that there is gross matter there, but it witnesseth likewise that there is fire in it too, and though it be little, we have Christ's own word for it, that it shall not be *quenched;* and if He favour it, no other power shall be able to quench it. You find not, indeed, absolute holiness in your persons, nor in your best performances, yet, if you breathe and follow after it, if the pulse of the heart beat thus, if the main current of your affections be towards purity, if sin be in you as your disease and greatest grief, and not as

your delight, then, take courage; you are as pure as travellers can be; and notwithstanding that impure spirit, Satan, and the impurity of your own spirits, vex you daily with temptations, and often foil you, yet, in despite of them all, you shall arrive safe at home where perfection dwells.

The wisdom from above is pure.] Be ashamed, then, of your extreme folly, you that take pleasure in any kind of uncleanness. Especially, seeing God hath reformed and purged His House amongst us, you that are, or should be, His living temples, remain not unreformed. If you do, Church reformation will be so far from profiting you, that as a clearer light, it will but serve to make your impurity both more visible and more inexcusable. If you mean that the Holy Ghost should dwell with you, entertain Him, avoiding both spiritual and fleshly pollutions. The word here used doth more particularly signify *chastity;* and certainly, wherever this *wisdom from above* is, this comely grace is one of her attendants. Whatever any have been in times past, let all be persuaded henceforth to mortify all lustful and carnal affections. Know that there is more true and lasting pleasure in the contempt of unlawful pleasures, than in the enjoyment of them. Grieve not, then, the good Spirit of God with actions or speeches, yea, or with thoughts that are impure. The unholy soul, like the mystical Babylon, makes itself a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of filthy spirits; and if it continues to be such, it must, when it dislodges, take up its habitation with cursed spirits for ever in utter darkness. But as for those that are sincerely and affectionately *pure*, that is, *pure in heart*, our Saviour hath pronounced their begun happiness—*Blessed are they that are pure in heart*, and assured them of full happiness—*for they shall see God.* This wisdom is sent from Heaven on purpose to guide the elect thither by the way of purity. And mark how well their reward is suited to their labour: their frequent contemplating and beholding of God's purity as they could, while they were on their journey, and their labouring to be like Him, shall bring them to sit down in glory, and to be for ever the pure beholders of that purest object. *They shall see God.* What this is, we cannot tell you, nor can you conceive it; but walk heavenwards in purity, and long to be there, where you shall know what it means; *For you shall see Him as He is.*

Now to that blessed Trinity be praise for ever!

SERMON II.

PREFACE.

I will return to my place, saith the Lord by His Prophet, *till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me early.* Hos. v. 15. The Father of Mercies hides Himself from His children, not to lose them, but that they may seek Him, and may learn, having found Him, to keep closer by Him than formerly. He threatens them, to keep them from punishment: if His threatening work submission, it is well; if not, He punishes them gently, to save them from destruction. He seeks no more but that they acknowledge

their offence, and seek His face. Wonderful clemency! For who can forbear to confess multitudes of offences, who know themselves? And who can choose but seek Thy face, who ever saw Thy face, and who know Thee? *In their affliction they will seek me early.* He that prays not till affliction comes and forces him to it, is very slothful; but he that prays not in affliction, is altogether senseless. Certainly, they that at this time are not more than ordinarily fervent in prayer, or do not at least desire and strive to be so, cannot well think that there is any spiritual life within them. Surely it is high time to stir up ourselves to prayers and tears. All may bear arms in that kind of service. Weak women may be strong in prayer; and those tears wherein they usually abound upon other occasions, cannot be so well spent as this way. Let them not run out in howlings and impatience, but bring them, by bewailing sins, private as well as public, to quench this public fire. And ye men, yea, ye men of courage, account it no disparagement thus to weep. We read often of David's tears, which were no stain to his valour. That cloud which hangs over us, which the frequent vapours of our sins have made, except it dissolve and fall down again in these sweet showers of godly tears, is certainly reserved to be the matter of a dreadful storm. Be instant, every one, in secret, for the averting of this wrath, and let us now again unite the cries of our hearts for this purpose to our compassionate God, in the name and mediation of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Job xxxiv. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.

That which I see not, teach Thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

The great sin, as well as the great misery of man, is, the forgetting of God; and the great end and use of His works and of His word, is, to teach us the right remembrance and consideration of Him in all estates. These words do particularly instruct us in the application of our thoughts towards Him in the time of affliction. The shortness and the various signification of the words used in the original, give occasion to some other readings and another sense of them. But this we have in our Translation, being not only very profitable, but very congruous, both to the words of the primitive text, and to the contexture of the discourse, I shall keep to it, without dividing your thoughts by the mentioning of any other. Neither will I lead you so far about, as to speak of the great dispute of this book, and the question about it which is held. He that speaks here, though the youngest of the company, yet, as a wise and calm-spirited man, closes all with a discourse of excellent temper, and full of grave, useful instructions, amongst which this is one.

Surely it is meet to be said (or spoken) to God.] This speaking to God, though it may be vocal, yet it is not necessarily nor chiefly so, but is always mainly, and may often be only, mental: without this, the words of the mouth, how well chosen and well expressed soever they be, are to God of no account or signification at all. But if the heart speak, even when there is not a word in the mouth, it is that He hearkens to,

and regards that speech, though made by a voice that none hears but He, and in a language that none understands but He.

But it is a rare, unfrequent thing, this communing of the heart with God, speaking its thoughts to Him concerning itself, and concerning Him, and His dealings with it, and the purposes and intentions it hath towards Him,—which is the speech here recommended, and is that Divine exercise of meditation and soliloquy of the soul with itself and with God, hearkening what the Lord God speaks to us within us, and our hearts echoing and resounding his words, (as Psalm xxvii. 8, 9,) and opening to Him our thoughts of them and of ourselves. Though they stand open, and He sees them all, even when we tell Him not of them, yet, because He loves us, He loves to hear them of our own speaking: *Let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet;* as a father delights in the little stammering, lisping language of his beloved child. And if the reflex affection of children be in us, we shall love also to speak with *our* Father, and to tell Him all our mind, and to be often with Him in the entertainments of our secret thoughts.

But the most of men are little within: either they wear out their hours in vain discourse with others, or possibly vainer discourses with themselves. Even those who are not of the worst sort, and who, possibly, have their times of secret prayer, yet do not so delight to think of God, and to speak with Him, as they do to be conversant in other affairs, and companies, and discourses, in which there is a great deal of froth and emptiness. Men think, by talking of many things, to be refreshed; and yet, when they have done, find that it is nothing, and that they had much better have been alone, or have said nothing. Our thoughts and speeches in most things, run to waste, yea, are defiled; as water spilt on the ground is both lost, and cannot be gathered up again, and is polluted, mingled with dust. But no word spoken to God, from the serious sense of a holy heart, is lost: he receives it, and returns it into our bosom with advantage. A soul that delights to speak to Him, will find that He also delights to speak to it. And this communication, certainly, is the sweetest and happiest choice; to speak little with men, and much with God. One short word, such as this here, spoken to God in a darted thought, eases the heart more when it is afflicted, than the largest discourses and complainings to the greatest and powerfullest of men, or the kindest and most friendly. It gives not only ease, but joy, to say to God, *I have sinned, yet I am thine;* or, as here, *I have borne chastisement, I will no more offend.* The time of affliction is peculiarly a time of speaking to God; and such speech as this is peculiarly befitting such a time. And this is one great recommendation of affliction, that it is a time of wiser and more sober thoughts—a time of the returning of the mind inwards and upwards. A high place, fulness and pleasure, draw the mind more outwards. Great light and white colours dissipate the sight of the eye, and the very thoughts of the mind too; and men find that the night is a fitter season for deep thoughts. *It is better,* says Solomon, *to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.* Those blacks made the mind more serious. It is a rare thing to find much retirement unto God, much humility and brokenness of spirit, true purity and spirituality of heart, in the affluence and great prosperities

of the world. It is no easy thing to carry a very full cup even, and to digest well the fatness of a great estate and great place. They are not to be envied who have them: even though they be of the better sort of men, it is a thousand to one but they shall be losers by the gains and advancements of this world, suffering proportionably great abatements of their best advantages, by their prosperity. The generality of men, while they are at ease, do securely neglect God, and little mind either to speak to Him, or to hear Him speak to them. God complains thus of His own people: *I spoke to them in their prosperity, and they would not hear.* The noises of coach-wheels, of their pleasures, and of their great affairs, so fill their ears, that the *still voice* wherein God is, cannot be heard. *I will bring her into the wilderness, and there I will speak to her heart*, says God of His Church. There the heart is more at quiet to hear God, and to speak to Him, and is disposed to speak in the style here prescribed, humbly and repentingly.

I have borne chastisement.] The speaking this unto God under affliction signifies, that our affliction is from His hand; and to the acknowledgment of this truth, the very natural consciences of men do incline them. Though trouble be the general lot of mankind, yet it doth not come on him by an improvidential fatality: though *man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards*, yet it *comes not out of the dust.* Job v. 6, 7. It is no less true, and in itself no less clear, that all the good we enjoy, and all the evil we suffer, come from the same Hand; but we are naturally more sensible of evil than of good, and therefore do more readily reflect upon the original and causes of it. Our distresses lead us to the notice of the righteous God inflicting them, and of our own unrighteous ways procuring them, and provoking Him so to do; and therefore *it is meet* to speak in this submissive, humble language to Him. It is by all means necessary to *speak* to Him. He is the party we have to deal withal, or to speak to, even in those afflictions whereof men are the intervenient visible causes. They are, indeed, but instrumental causes, the *rod and staff* in His hand who smites us; therefore, our business is with *Him*, in whose Supreme Hand alone the mitigations and increases, the continuance and the ending, of our troubles lie. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, against whom we have sinned?* Isa. xlii. 24. So, Lam. i. 14, *The yoke of my transgressions is bound on by His hand.* Therefore, it is altogether necessary in all afflictions to *speak to Him.* And as it is necessary to speak to Him, so *it is meet* to speak *thus* to Him, *I have borne chastisement, I will no more offend.* These words have in them the true composition of real repentance, humble submission and holy resolution. *I have borne chastisement*—that is, I have justly borne it, and do heartily submit to it; I bear it justly, and take it well; Lord, I acquit thee, and accuse myself. This language becomes the most innocent persons in the world in their suffering. Job knew it well, and did often acknowledge it in his preceding speeches. Though sometimes, in the heat of dispute, and in opposition to the uncharitable and unjust imputations of his friends, he seems to overstrain the assertion of his own integrity (which Elihu here corrects), you know he cries out, *I have*

sinned against Thee: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou preserver of men? Job vii. 20. And ch. ix. ver. 30, *If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

Vain, foolish persons fret and foam at the miscarriage of a cause they apprehend to be righteous; but this is a great vanity and inconsiderate temerity in not observing the great and apparent unrighteousness in the persons managing it. But though both the cause and the persons were just to the greatest height imaginable amongst men, yet still were it meet to speak thus unto God in the lowest acknowledgments and confessions, that *righteousness belongs unto Him, and unto us shame and confusion of face.* So says the Church, Lam. iii. *The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against His commandments.* Though affliction is not always designedly intended as the chastisement of some particular sin, yet, where sin is, (and that is the case of all the sons of Adam,) affliction coming in, may safely be considered in its natural cognation and alliance with sin, and so press forth humble confessions of sin, and resolutions against it. And thus in Lev. xxvi. 41, *They shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity;* shall take it humbly and penitently, and kiss the rod.

Oh, that there were such a heart in us!—that, instead of empty words, that scatter themselves in the wind, our many vain discourses we hold one with another, concerning our past and present sufferings, and further fears, and disputing of many fruitless and endless questions, we were more abundantly turning our speech this way, in unto God, and saying, We desire to give Thee glory, and to take shame to ourselves, and to bear our chastisement, and to offend no more; to return each from his evil way; and to gain this by the furnace, the purging away of our dross,—our many and great iniquities,—our oaths and cursings, and lying,—our deceit, and oppressions, and pride, and covetousness,—our base love of ourselves and hating one another,—that we may be delivered from the tyranny of our own lusts and passions; and, in other things, *let the Lord do with us as seems good in His eyes.* Oh, that we were speaking to God in Ephraim's words, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20: *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned,* &c.: words not unlike these would stir His bowels, as there: as it is said, that one string perfectly tuned to another, being touched, the other stirs of itself. When a stubborn child leaves struggling under the rod, and turns to entreating, the father then leaves off striking; nothing overcomes him but that. When a man says unto God, Father, I have provoked Thee to this; but pardon, and through thy grace I will do so no more; then the rod is thrown aside, and the *Father of mercies* and His humbled child fall to mutual tenderness and embraces.

What I see not, teach Thou me.] The great article of conversion is, the disengagement of the heart from the love of sin. In that posture, as it actually forsakes whatsoever it perceives to be amiss, so it stands in an absolute readiness to return to every duty that yet lies hidden, upon the first discovery. That is here the genuine voice of a repentant sinner, *What I see not, teach Thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

This is a very necessary supplication, even for the most discerning and clearest-sighted penitent, both in reference to the commandment and rule for discovering the general nature and several kinds of sin, and withal for the application of this general light to the examination of a man's own heart and ways, that so he may have a more exact and particular account of his own sins.

The former part of the petition is for the knowledge of the law of God, as the rule by which a man is to try and to judge himself. The most knowing are not above the need of this request; yea, I am persuaded, the most knowing know best how much they need it, and are most humbled in themselves in the conscience of their ignorance and darkness in Divine things, and are most earnest and pressing in this daily supplication for increases of light and spiritual knowledge from Him who is the Fountain of it: *What I see not, teach Thou me.* On the other side, the least knowing are often the most confident that they know all, and swelled with a conceited sufficiency of their model and determination of all things, both dogmatical and practical; and therefore are they the most imperious and magisterial in their conclusions, and the most impatient of contradiction, or even of the most modest dissent.

The wisest and holiest persons speak always in the humblest and most depressing style of their own knowledge, and that not with an affectation of modesty, but under the real sense of the thing as it is, and the sincere account they give of it, and that commonly when they are declaring themselves most solemnly, as in the sight of God, or speaking in supplication to Him with whom they dare least of all dissemble. Whosoever he was that spake those *words*, in the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs, surely he was a man of eminent wisdom and piety, and yet he begins thus: *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man; I have neither learned wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the Holy.* And though he was so diligent a student, and so great a proficient in the law of God, yet, how importunate a petitioner is he for the understanding of it, as if he knew nothing at all! Besides the like expressions in other Psalms, in that one Psalm, [the cxix.] which, although of such length, hath nothing but the breathing forth of his affection to the word and law of God, how often doth David in it reiterate that petition, *Teach me Thy statutes!*—so often, that a carnal mind is tempted to grow weary of it, as a nauseating tautology; but he made it still new with the freshness and vehemency of his affection: *Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts—Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law*—and *Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wonders of Thy law*,—unseal mine eyes, as if they were still veiled and dark. These are the earnest and nobly ambitious desires that daily solicit holy hearts, and stir them up to solicit the Teacher of hearts, to be admitted more into the secrets and recesses of Divine knowledge; not to those abysses that God intends should be secret still, and from which He hath barred out our curiosity, as the forbidden tree of knowledge, those secrets that belong to Himself alone, and concern us not to inquire after. And certainly, to be wading in those deeps, is the way to be drowned in them. *The searcher of ma-*

jesty shall be oppressed with glory. Yet, there is in man, a perverse, preposterous desire, to pore upon such things as are on purpose hidden that we should not inquire after them, and to seek after useless, empty speculations of them, which is a luxury and intemperance of the understanding, like unto that, and springing from that, which at first undid us in the root. These are times full of those empty, airy questions, and notions in which there is no clearness nor certainty to be attained, and if it were, yet it would serve to little or no purpose, not making the man who thinks he hath found them out, one jot the better or holier man than he was before. *What avails it,* says a devout author, *to dispute and discourse high concerning the Trinity, and want humility, and so displease that Trinity?* The light and knowledge suited according to the intendment of this copy, is of nature, such as purifies the heart and rectifies the life. *What I see not, teach Thou me;* that is, of such things as may serve this end, that *if I have done iniquity, I may do it no more.* This is sound and solid knowledge, such a light as inflames the heart with the love of God and of the beauties of holiness, and still, as it grows, makes those to grow likewise. Such are still, we see, David's multiplied supplications in that cxix. Psalm; not to know reserved and useless things, but, *Hide not Thy commandments from me. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me:* now, what is it that Thy creature and workmanship begs of Thee? What is that which will complete my being, and make me do honour to my Maker? This is it,—*Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.*

You that would be successful supplicants in this request, wean your hearts from that vanity of desire: such knowledge is as the cypress-tree, fair and tall, but fruitless and sapless. Apply all you know, to the purging out of sin, and intend all the further knowledge you desire, to that same end. Seek to be acquainted with higher rules of mortification, and self-denial, and charity, than as yet you have either practised, or possibly so much as thought on; that by these, your affections and actions may be advanced to greater degrees of purity, and conformity with the holiness of God. And for this end, beg of him to teach you what you see not in the exactness of the law and rule; and withal, (which is the other thing in this word,) that, what you see not in the application of it and search of yourself, He would likewise shew you; for in that, we are commonly as undiscerning and dim-sighted as in the other. Even where men have some notion of the rule and their duty, yet they perceive not their own, even their gross recessions and declinings from it. Love is a blinding thing, and above all love, self-love; and every man is naturally his own flatterer: he deals not faithfully and sincerely with himself in the search of his own evils. Now this we are to entreat of God, to be led into ourselves, and to be applied to the work of self-searching, by His own hand; not only to have a right apprehension of the law given us, but a true sight of ourselves. Oh! how many hidden, undiscerned, yea, unsuspected impurities and follies are there in the hearts of those who are the most diligent in this inquiry, much more in the greater part, even of such as cannot absolutely be denied the name of good men! Some honest intentions and good

desires there are in them; but they are slothful and unwilling to go into this painful business of trying and judging themselves, and when they set to it, many secret corners, and, in those, many latent corruptions do escape their search. *Cleanse me from secret faults*, says David; that is, not only those hidden from men, but even from myself, as is clearly his meaning, by the words preceding. *Who knows the errors of his life?* Therefore is it necessary that we should desire light of God. *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, says Solomon, *searching the innermost parts of the belly;* but it is a candle unlighted, when He does not illuminate it for that search. Oh! what a deal of vanity and love of this world, envy and secret pride, lurks in many of our hearts, which we do not at all perceive, till God causeth us to see it, leading us in, as he did the prophet Ezekiel in the vision, to see the idolatry of the Jews in His very temple, by which they had provoked him to forsake it, and go far from his sanctuary; and having discovered one parcel, leads him in further, and makes him enter through the wall, and adds often, *Son of man, hast thou seen these? I will cause thee to see yet more abominations, and yet more abominations.* Thus is it within many of us who should be His temples, but we have a multitude of images of jealousy, one lying hid behind another, till He thus discovers them to us. Oh, what need have we to entreat Him thus, *What I see not, teach Thou me!*

Now, in both these, both in the knowledge of our rule and of ourselves, though there may be some useful subserviency of the ministry of men, yet, the great Teacher of the true knowledge of His law, and of Himself, and of ourselves, is God. Men may speak to the ear, but His chair is in Heaven who teaches hearts: *cathedram habet in cœlo.* Matchless Teacher! who teacheth more in one hour than men can do in a whole age, who can cure the invincible unteachableness of the dullest heart, *give understanding to the simple, and open the eyes of the blind!* So then, would we be made wise, wise for eternity, learned in real, living divinity, let us sit down at His feet, and make this our continual request, *What I see not, teach Thou me!*

If I have done iniquity.] That is, any iniquity that I yet know not of, any hidden sin, let me but once see it, and, I hope, Thou shalt see it no more within me; not willingly lodged and entertained. This speaks an entire, total giving up of all sin, and is a proclaiming of utter defiance and enmity against it; casting out what is already found out, without delay, and resolving that still in further search, as it shall be more discovered, it shall be forthwith dislodged, without a thought of sparing or partial indulgence to any thing that is sin, or that is like it, or that may any way befriend it, or be an occasion and incentive of it. This is that absolute renouncing of sin, and surrender of the whole soul and our whole selves to God, which whosoever do not heartily consent to and resolve on, their religion is in vain, and (which is here the point) their affliction is in vain: whatsoever they have suffered, they have gained nothing by all their sufferings, if their hearts remain still self-willed, stubborn, untamed, and unpliable to God. And this makes their miseries out of measure miserable, and their sins out of measure sinful: whereas, were it thus qualified, and

had it any operation this way towards the subjecting of their hearts unto God, affliction were not to be called misery, but would go under the title of a blessedness: *Blessed is the man whom Thou correctest and teachest him out of Thy law.* That is suiting with this here desired, *I have borne chastisement; what I see not, teach Thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more.* Oh! were it thus with us, my brethren, how might we rejoice, and insert into our praises all that is come upon us, if it had wrought or advanced any thing of this kind within us, this blessed compliance with the will of God; not entertaining any thing knowingly that displeases Him; finding a pleasure in the denial and destruction of our own most beloved pleasures at His appointment and for His sake. Whatsoever is in us, and dearest to us, that would offend us, that would draw us to offend Him, *were it the right hand, let it be cut off; or the right eye, let it be plucked out:* or, to make shorter work, let the whole man die at once, crucified with Jesus, *that we may be henceforth dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to ourselves, and alive only to God.*

SERMON III.

PREFACE.

THERE is no exercise so delightful to those that are truly godly, as the solemn worship of God, if they find His powerful and sensible presence in it; and indeed there is nothing on earth more like to Heaven than that is. But when He withdraws Himself, and withholds the influence and breathings of His Spirit in his service, then good souls find nothing more lifeless and uncomfortable. But there is this difference, even at such a time, betwixt them and those that have no spiritual life in them at all, that they find, and are sensible of this difference; whereas the others know not what it means. And for the most part, the greatest number of those that meet together with a profession to worship God, yet are such as do not understand this difference. Custom and formality draw many to the ordinary places of public worship, and fill too much of the room; and sometimes novelty and curiosity, drawing to places not ordinary, have a large share: but how few are there that come on purpose to meet with God in His worship, and to find His power in strengthening their weak faith, and weakening their strong corruptions, affording them provision of spiritual strength and comfort against times of trial, and, in a word, advancing them some steps forward in their journey towards Heaven, where happiness and perfection dwell! Certainly, these sweet effects are to be found in these ordinances, if we would look after them. Let it grieve us then, that we have so often lost our labour in the worship of God through our own neglect, and entreat the Lord, that at this time He would not send us away empty. For how weak soever the means be, if He put forth His strength, the work shall be done, in some measure, to His glory and our edification. Now that He may be pleased to do so, to leave a blessing behind Him, let us pray, &c.

Isaiah xxviii. 5, 6.

In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people.

And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

All the works of Divine providence are full of wisdom and justice, even every one severally considered; yet we observe them best to be such, when we take notice of their order and mutual aspect one to another, whether in the succession of times, or such passages as are contemporary and fall in together at one and the same time. As, when the Lord brings notable judgments upon the proud workers of iniquity, and at the same time confers special mercies on His own people, who is there that may not perceive justice and mercy illustrating and beautifying one another? It is true, the full reward and perfect rest of the godly is not here below; they would be sorry if it were: nor is this the place of plenary punishment for the ungodly; men may look for a judgment too. Yet, the Lord is pleased at some times to give some resemblances and pledges, as it were, of that great and last judgment in remarkable passages of justice and mercy, at one and the same time; and such a time it is that the Prophet foretels in this his sermon, which concerns the two sister kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Having denounced a heavy calamity to come upon Israel, under the name of Ephraim, he comforts those of Judah under the name of *the residue of His people*. They not being so grossly corrupted as the others were, he stays them with this promise: *In that day*, saith he, when the other shall be overwhelmed, as with a deluge, *the Lord of Hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people.*

The promise is made up of three benefits, yet the three are but one; or rather, one is all the three to them: *The Lord of Hosts*, it is He that shall be their *honour, wisdom*, and *strength; He shall be a crown*, &c. But first, a word as to the circumstance of time, *In that day*.

That sovereign Lord, who at first set up the lights of heaven to distinguish times and seasons by their constant motion, and likewise by His supreme providence ruling the world, hath fixed the periods of states and kingdoms, and decreed their revolutions, their rising, ascending, and their height, with their decline and setting, hath by a special providence determined those changes and vicissitudes that befall His Church. That which the Psalmist speaks, in his own particular, Psal. xxxi. 15, holds of each believer, and of the Church which they make up in all ages and places: *I said, Thou art my God, my times are in Thy hand.* A sure and steady hand indeed, and therefore he builds his confidence upon it, ver 13. *They took counsel against me, but I trusted in thee.* And upon this, he prays in faith, that the face of God may shine upon him, and the wicked may be ashamed.

Thus, then, as many of you as are looking after a day of mercy to the Church of God, pray and believe upon this ground, That the time

of it is neither in the frail hands of those that favour and seek it, nor in the hands of those that oppose it, how strong and subtle soever they be, but in His almighty hand, who doth in heaven and earth what pleaseth Him. If He have said, *Now*, and *here*, will I give a day of refreshment to my people who have long groaned for it, a day of the purity and power of religion; if, I say, this be *His* purpose, they must have somewhat more than omnipotence, who can hinder it. When His appointed time comes, to make a day of deliverance dawn upon His Church, after their long night either of affliction or of defection, or both; they who contrive against that day-spring, are as vain as if they would sit down to plot how to hinder the sun from rising in the morning. And they who let go their hopes of it, because of great apparent difficulties that interpose betwixt their eye and the accomplishment of that work, are as weak as if they should imagine, when mists and thick vapours appear about the horizon in the morning, that these could hinder the rising of the sun, which is so far out of their reach, and *comes forth as a bridegroom, and rejoices as a mighty man to run his race*, says David. Those mists may indeed hinder his clear appearance, and keep it from the eye for a time; but reason tells us, even then, that they cannot stop his course. And faith assures us no less in the other case, that no difficulties can hold back God's day and work of mercy to His people. But you will say, All the difficulty is, to know whether the appointed time be near or not. It is true, we have no particular prophecies to assure us; but certainly, when God *awakes* His children and makes them *rise*, this is a probable sign that it is near day. I mean, when He stirs them up to more than usual hopes, and prayers, and endeavours, it is very likely that He intends them some special good. But yet more, when He Himself is *arisen*, (as it pleaseth Him to speak,) that is, when He is begun to appear, in a more than ordinary manner of working by singular and wonderful footsteps of providence, this is, no doubt, a sign that He will go on to shew remarkable mercy to *Sion*, and that *the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come*. Psal. cii. 13.

Howsoever then, let the wonderful workings of the Lord move those of you that have any power and opportunity, to be now (if ever) active for the greatest good both of the present age and of posterity. And you that can be no other way useful, yet you shall be no small helpers if you be much in prayer; let both your hopes and your fears, serve to sharpen your prayers. Be not too much dejected with any discouragement, neither be ye carnally lifted up with outward appearances; for *the heart of him that is lifted up, is not upright in him*, Hab. ii. 4; but *live*, as *the just* do, *by* your *faith*. And if the deferring of your hopes should *sicken your hearts*, as Solomon speaks, yet, stay and comfort them with the cordial of the promises. This you are sure of, you have God's own word engaged for it, that in those latter days Babylon shall be brought to the dust, and the true Church of Christ shall flourish and increase. And this *vision is for an appointed time;* (as Habakkuk says of his;) *at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

In that day.] That is, in the day of Ephraim's or Israel's cala-

mity denounced in the former verses; which, as most do conceive, was when the Assyrian oppressed them, and in the end led them captive, in the reign of Hosea, as you have the history of it, 2 Kings xvii., at which time Hezekiah was king of Judah, as you find in the following chapter: and in *that notable reformation* wrought by him, with those blessings that followed upon it, is found the accomplishment of this promise to Judah, *In that day*, &c. The parallel of God's different dealing with these two kingdoms at the time there specified, (*in that day*,) does afford divers lessons, which might be here not impertinently taken notice of. Only this:

Though Judah also had its own corruptions when Hezekiah came to the crown, yet it pleased the Lord to spare them and work a peaceable reformation, making Israel's punishment their warning. Truly, that nation with whom the Lord deals thus graciously, is vilely ungrateful if they observe it not with much humility and thankfulness, and with profit too. If the Lord should answer your desires and hopes with a reformation in a peaceable way, and should yet lengthen out your long continued peace, and should make this little past shaking of it cause it to take root the faster; if He should, I say, do this, where would ye find fit praises for such a wonder of mercy?—especially considering, that in the meanwhile He hath made other reformed churches fields of blood, and made, as it were, the sound of their stripes preach repentance to us. But certainly, if the hearing the voice of the rod prevail not, we shall feel the smart of it, as this people of Judah did afterwards, because they were not so wise as to become wiser and better by Israel's folly and calamity. We are expecting great things at our Lord's hands, and our provocations and sins against Him are great; yet there is no one of them all puts us in so much danger of disappointment, as impenitence. Were there more repentance and personal reformation amongst us, we might take it as a hopeful forerunner of that public reformation which so many seem now to desire.

The Lord of Hosts.] This style of His, you know, is frequent in the Prophets, in their predictions of mercy and judgment; intimating both His greatness and majesty, and His supreme power for accomplishing His word. No created power can resist Him; yea, all must serve Him. The most excellent creatures can have no greater honour: the greatest are not exempted, nor the meanest excluded from serving Him. In Acts xii. 23, you find one of the noblest creatures, and a number of the vilest, made use of at the same time in the same service. Because Herod did accept of the sacrilege of the people, and gave not back to this Lord of hosts His own glory, *the angel of the Lord smote him*, and *the vermin devoured him*. And in Egypt, you know the employing of the destroying angel, and what variety of hosts this Lord of hosts did employ to plague them. What madness, then, is it to oppose and encounter this great General!—even in doubtful cases, to run on blindly, without examining, lest peradventure a man should be found a fighter against God. And on the other side, it is great weakness to admit any fear under His banner. If a man could say, when he was told of the multitude of the ships the enemy had, *Against how many do ye reckon me?* how much more

justly may we reckon this Lord of hosts, against multitudes of enemies, how great soever! *They are to Him as the drop of a bucket, and the smallest dust of the balance.* It is ignorance and mean thoughts of this mighty Lord that makes his enemies so confident; and it is the same evil, in some degree, or, at the best, forgetfulness of His power, that causeth diffidence in His followers. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord, thy Maker.* Isa. li. 12, 13. Now this same Lord of Hosts, you know, is likewise called *the God of peace:* He is indeed, *et pace et bello insignis, splendid both in peace and war.* The blessing of peace, and the success of war, are both from Him; and to Him alone is due the praise of both.

Shall be for a crown of glory.] He shall dignify and adorn them by His special presence; to wit, in the purity of His ordinances and religion amongst them: the profession and flourishing of that, shall be their special glory and beauty. For, as the other two benefits concern their civil good, *justice* flourishing within, and wealth and opulency from without, so, doubtless, this first, this *glory* and *beauty*, is religion, as the chiefest of the three, and the other two are its attendants. In Psalm xxvi. 8, the sanctuary, the place of their solemn worship, is called *the place where God's honour dwelleth*, or the tabernacle of His honour, and, Psalm xcvi. 9, *the glorious sanctuary*, or *the beauty of holiness.* And the ark of God, you know, was called *the glory. The glory is departed from Israel*, (said the wife of Phineas,) *for the ark of God is taken.* 1 Sam. iv. 21. Pure religion and a pure worship is the glory of God amongst His people, and, consequently, *their* glory. Now, referring this prophecy to Hezekiah's time, the accomplishment of it is evident, in that work of reformation whereof you have the full history, 2 Chron. xxix. 30, *&c.*

If it be thus, that the purity of religion and worship, is *the crown and glory* of a people; and therefore, on the other side, that their deepest stain of dishonour and vileness, is the vitiating of religion with human devices; then, to contend for the preservation or the reformation of it, is noble and worthy of a Christian. It is for the crown of Jesus Christ, which is likewise a *crown of glory* and a *diadem of beauty* to *them*, He being their head. It is, indeed, the true glory both of kings and their kingdoms. Labour, then, for constancy in this work: let no man take your crown from you. You know how busy the emissaries of the Church of Rome have been to take it from us, or, at least, to pick the diamonds out of it, and put in false, counterfeit ones in their places. I mean, they stole away the power of religion, and filled up the room with shadows and fopperies of their own devising. It is the vanity of that Church to think they adorn the worship of God when they dress it up with splendour in her service, which, though some magnify it so much, yet may most truly be called a glistering slavery and captivity. Then is she truly free, and wears her *crown*, when the ordinances of God are conformable to His own appointment. It is vanity in man, I say, when they dress it up with a multitude of gaudy ceremonies, and make *it* the smallest part of *itself;* whereas, indeed, its true glory consists not in pomp, but in purity and simplicity. In the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, we find the

Church, under the name of a woman, richly attired, indeed, but her ornaments be all heavenly; *the sun* her clothing, and her crown *of twelve stars*. Needs she, then, borrow sublunary glory? No, she treads upon it: *the moon* is *under her feet*. There is another woman, indeed, in that same book, *arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones*, and *having a golden cup in her hand*, but that golden cup is *full of abominations and filthiness*, and she herself the *mother of abominations*. Apoc. xvii. 4. The natural man judges according to his reach; but to a spiritual eye there is a most genuine beauty in the service of God and the government of His house; and when they are nearest to the rule, the word of God, then is it that the Lord himself is *the crown and diadem* of His Church.

A crown of glory.] Again: we may consider this personally, as belonging in particular to every believer. They are all *made kings and priests unto God the Father*. Apoc. i. 6. They are *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9, how despicable soever to the world. This is their dignity: *The Lord is their crown and diadem*. He subdues their lusts, and makes them kings over their own affections, and more than conquerors over all troubles and persecutions; whereas carnal men are continually hurried, like slaves, unto base employments, still kept toiling in the ignoble service of their own lusts. They think, indeed, it is their liberty; but that is a baseness of spirit that complies so well with so vile and servile a condition. And whereas they judge the godly to be the refuse and dross of the earth, and the proper objects of contempt, this is because this their crown, though most glorious, is invisible to the eye of nature. *The Lord is a crown*. If they knew what this is, they would see enough in it to countervail their outward meanness and the reproaches the world cast on them: as the apostle St. Peter hath it, 1 Pet. iv. 14, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you*. He is their *crown*.

And observe, how this crown is opposed to that blasted glory and fading *crown of pride*, spoken of in the former verses. *Wo to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower*.

Who is there that sees not, in daily experience, the vanity and inconstancy of worldly glory, and yet, how few are there that wean themselves from it, and learn to disdain it! Still men dote upon that which is not, upon a shadow, a nothing. But would you have a glory that fadeth not, a garland that cannot wither, make the Lord your *crown* and your *glory*; and if He be so, glory in Him, and in nothing else. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth* ME. Jer. ix. 23, 24.

You that are noble, aspire to this *crown*, as being so far above your perishing honours and bounded powers. And you that are outwardly meaner and lower, see how little cause you have to complain of your condition, seeing you are not debarred from this best and greatest honour. And, that you may discern it aright what it is, know that it consists in the renovation of God's image within you, which is in

holiness and righteousness: so the Lord becomes your *crown* in the kingdom of grace. And by this you may discover, whether or no you have attained it: if you can yet delight to wallow in the puddle and pleasures of sin, you are far from this royal condition; but if you find your soul possessed with the love of holiness, and that you are trampling upon profane delights, this may persuade you that God hath enabled you, and crowned you with His grace, and will crown you with his glory. Again, try it by this; if the Lord is become your crown and your glory, you will glory in Him, and in nothing else. Though you be wise, you will not glory in your wisdom, nor in strength, nor in riches, nor in honours, though you had them all; but if you glory, you will glory in the Lord. And withal, your highest joy will be, to see the advancement of His glory, and, if you can, to be any way serviceable to the advancing of it.

And for a spirit of judgment.] Both to those that *sit in judgment*, and to the people. For justice is the strongest base and establishment of authority. And withal, the influence of it is most sweet and comfortable to those who are under authority; and where it is wanting, that order and relation of superiors and inferiors, which God hath appointed in the societies of men for their good, tends exceedingly to the damage of both. And therefore, where God intendeth to continue the peace and welfare of a people, He is liberal in pouring out much of this *spirit of judgment* on those who *sit in judgment*. On the contrary, it is for a heavy punishment, when He withdraws His spirit from rulers, and leaves them wholly to the corruption and vanity of their own spirits.

To him that sitteth in judgment. That is, to all that are in places of authority and judicature, from the supreme to the lowest magistrate; for this concerns them all. For they be all raised in their subordination, and several places above the people, for the benefit and good of the people; as the stars, that be set so high, yet are placed there to be useful and beneficial to the inferior world.

Now this spirit of judgment comprehends in it both due *wisdom* and *prudence*, for the trial and right judging of affairs, and for the discerning betwixt sound and perverse counsel; and withal, a *judgment practically good*, that cannot be biassed from the straight line of equity and justice by any sinister respect.

Now, seeing the *spirit of judgment* is from the Lord, yea, He is this spirit, it ought to persuade those that *sit in judgment*, to entreat and pray for this, and to depend upon it, and beware of self-confidence. *Trust in the Lord*, saith Solomon, *and lean not to thine own understanding:* if you do, it will prove but a broken reed. And as they that sit in judgment should entreat His spirit by prayer, so, generally, all must share with them in this duty, and make supplication for all that are in authority over them, especially in extraordinary times. Truly we have matter of thankfulness, that the Lord hath in some measure inclined the royal heart of our sovereign to the desires of his people; and we ought still to pray, that the Lord would *give the king His judgments;* and then, as the Psalmist adds, *The mountains shal bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.* Psal. lxxii. 3. And, for this end, let all who wish the public, yea, their own

good, pray much for abundance of this *spirit of judgment* to be conferred on them. Your eyes and expectations are upon them. If you would enjoy the lamp, you must pour in oil. This spirit, indeed, you cannot pour upon them, but if you pour out many prayers, you may draw it from above: He will give it, who here promises to be *a spirit of judgment.*

And for strength. Observe, the way to be powerful and successful against foreign enemies, is, to have religion and justice flourishing at home. And truly, if it please our God to answer the desires of His people at this time, it may so unite the affection and strength of the two kingdoms, (*the Lord of hosts* being their *strength,*) as to make them a terror to their enemies; whereas they were become a scorn and derision to them. For your particular, labour to make the Lord your glory, to have Christ made unto you, as the Apostle speaks, *both wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification,* which are the glory and beauty of the soul, *and redemption* from spiritual enemies. Draw strength from Him, to fight and prevail against them, till, after the short combat of this life, you obtain the crown, and dwell in His presence, where you shall fear no more assaults, neither of sin nor of affliction, but shall be for ever happy in the blessed vision of His face. *To him be glory.* Amen.

SERMON IV.

PREFACE.

External worship doth openly acknowledge a Deity, but want of inward sense in worship secretly denieth it: *the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* It is strange to hear so much noise of religion in the world, and to find so little piety. To present the living God with a carcass of lifeless worship, is to pay Him with shells of services, and so to mock Him. And it is a more admirable long-suffering in Him to defer the punishment of such devotion, than of all the other sins in the world. The Egyptian temples were rich and stately fabrics: a stranger who had looked upon them without, would have imagined some great deity within; but if they entered, (as Lucian says, laughing at them,) nothing was to be seen, but only some ape, or cat, or pied bull, or some other fine god like those. To behold our fair semblance of religion who frequent this house, it would appear that we were all the temples of the Holy Ghost; but whoso could look within us, would find in many of our hearts lust, pride, avarice, or some such like secret vice adored as a god. And these are they which, while our bodies sit here, do alienate our souls from the service of the Eternal God, so that we are either altogether senseless and dead before Him, or, if any fit of spiritual motion rise within us, we find it here, and here we leave it, as if it were sacrilege to take it home with us. But did once that Spirit of Grace breathe savingly upon our souls, we should straight renounce and abhor those base idols, and then all the current of our affection would run more in this channel: our services

would then be spiritual, and it would be our Heaven upon earth, to view God in his sanctuary. And the obtaining of the change, is, or should be, one main end of this our meeting; and, that it may be the happy effect of it, our recourse must be to the throne of grace by humble prayer, in the name of our Mediator, *Jesus Christ, the righteous.*

Isaiah lx. 1.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Admirable is the worth and depth of Divine providence! This, either we know not, or at least seldom remember. While we forget the wonders of providence, we direct our thoughts to baser objects, and think not on it; and while we forget the depth of providence, (if at any time we look towards it,) we judge rashly and think amiss of it. If this be true of that general providence whereby God rules the World, it is more true of His special providence towards his Church. This is both the most excellent piece of it, and therefore best worth the reading, and also the hardest piece, and therefore it requires sobriety in judging: above all other things, he that suddenly judges in this, makes haste to err. To have a right view of it, it must be taken altogether, and not by parcels. Pieces of rarest artifice, while they are a making, seem little worth, especially to an unskilful eye, which being completed, command admiration. Peter Martyr says well, *De operibus Dei, antequam actum, non est judicandam: There is no judging of the works of God, before they are finished.* There is a time when the daughters of Sion *embrace the dunghill,* and *sit desolate in the streets,* as Jeremiah hath it in his Lamentations, (iv. 5.) and at that same time the voice of Babylon, is, *I sit as a queen and shall see no sorrow.* Apoc. xviii. 7; Isa. xlvii. 7. All is out of order here. But if we stay awhile, we shall see Sion and Babylon appointed to change seats, by the great Master of the world: *Come down,* says He, *Daughter of Babylon, and sit in the dust.* Isa. xlvii. 1. And here, to Sion, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* It is an entire catastrophe: both parties find a notable alteration together. That same Hand that exalts the one, ruins the other. When the sun rises upon the Church, her antipodes must needs be covered with darkness: as we find it in the next verse to the text: *Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.*

The Prophet, elevated by the Spirit of God to a view of after ages as clear as if they were present, seems here to find His people sitting under the dark mantle of a sad and tedious night, and having long expected the sun's return in vain, before its time, they give over expectation when it is near them, and desperately fold themselves to lie perpetually in the dark. Now the Prophet, standing, as it were, awake upon some mountain, perceives the day approaching, and the golden chariots of the morning of deliverance hasting forward, and seems to come speedily with these glad news to a captive people, and sounds this trumpet in their ears, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come,*

The very manner of expression is sudden and rousing, without a copulative; not, *Arise and shine*, but, *Arise, shine*, &c.

The words have in them a clear stamp of relation to a low posture and obscure condition: they suppose a people lying or sitting without light. Deep distress is that dark foil that best sets off the lustre of marvellous deliverances; and among many other reasons of the Church's vicissitudes, why may not this be one? The Lord is more illustrious in the world by that deep wisdom and great power that shines when He raises and restores her from desperate afflictions, than if He had still preserved her in constant ease. He seems sometimes careless of her condition, and regardless of her groans; but even then, is He *waiting the most fit time to be gracious*, as our prophet speaks. And when it is time, out of the basest estate He brings her forth more fresh, strong, and beautiful than before. *Though you have lain among the pots, yet ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* Psal. lxviii. 13. Do with the Church what you will, she shall come through, and that with advantage. *Mergas profundo, pulchrior exilit*, as one says of Rome. Keep the Church seventy years captive, yet, after that, she shall arise and shine more glorious than ever.

But surely, the strain of this evangelic prophecy rises higher than any temporal deliverance. Therefore we must rise to some more spiritual sense of it, not excluding the former. And that which some call divers senses of the same scripture, is, indeed, but divers parts of one full sense. This prophecy is, out of question, a most rich description of the kingdom of Christ under the gospel. And in this sense, this invitation to *arise* and *shine* is mainly addressed to the mystical Jerusalem, yet not without some privilege to the literal Jerusalem beyond other people. They are first invited to *arise* and *shine*, because this sun arose first in their horizon. Christ came *of* the Jews, and came first *to* them. *The Redeemer shall come to Zion*, says our Prophet, in the former chapter. But miserable Jerusalem *knew not the day of her visitation, nor the things that concerned her peace, and therefore are they now hid from her eyes.* She delighted to deceive herself with fancies of I know not what imaginary grandeur and outward glory, to which the promised Messiah should exalt her, and did, in that kind particularly, abuse this very prophecy; so doting upon a sense grossly literal, she forfeited the enjoyment of those spiritual blessings that are here described. But undoubtedly, that people of the Jews shall once more be commanded to *arise and shine*, and their return shall be the riches of the Gentiles; and that shall be a more glorious time than ever the Church of God did yet behold. Nor is there any inconvenience, if we think that the high expressions of this prophecy have some spiritual reference to that time, since the great doctor of the Gentiles applies some words of the former chapter to that purpose, Rom. xi. 29. They forget a main point of the Church's glory, who pray not daily for the conversion of the Jews.

But to pass that, and insist on the spiritual sense of these words, as directed to the whole Church of Christ, they contain a powerful excitement to a twofold act, enforced (as I conceive) by one reason under a

twofold expression, neither of them superfluous, but each giving light to the other, and suiting very aptly with the two words of command: *Arise, for the glory of the Lord is risen, and shine, for thy light is come.*

I will not now subdivide these parts again, and cut them smaller, but will rather unite them again into this one proposition: *The coming and presence of Christ engages all to whom he comes, to arise and shine.* In this proposition may be considered, the nature of the duties, the universality of the subject, and the force of the reason.

I. The nature of the duties—what it is to *arise and shine.* Arising hath reference either to a fall, or to some contrary posture of sitting or lying, or to one of those two conditions which are so like one another, sleep, or death; and to all these, spiritually understood, may it here be referred. This is the voice of the Gospel to the sons of Adam, *Arise;* for in Him they all *fell.* The first sin of that first man was the great fall of mankind: it could not but undo us, it was from so high a station. Our daily sins are our daily falls, and they are the fruits of that great one. *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity,* says the Lord to His people, Hos. xiv. 1. As for those postures of sitting and lying, the Scripture makes use of them both to signify the state of sin. Says not St. John, *The world lies in wickedness?* 1 John v. 19. Are not the people said to *sit in darkness,* mentioned Matt. iv. 16? Which is directly opposite to *arise and shine.* In the darkness of Egypt, it is said, the people *sat still;* none arose from their places. In the gross mist of corrupt nature, man cannot bestir himself to any spiritual action; but when this light is come, then he may, and should arise.

Now for sleep and death, sin is most frequently represented in holy writ under their black vizors. To forbear citing places where they are severally so used, we shall find them jointly in one, Ephes. v. 14: *Arise, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead;* which place seems to have special allusion to this very text.

The impenitent sinner is as one buried in sleep: his soul is in darkness, fit for sleep, and loves to be so. That he may sleep the sounder, he shuts all the passages of light, as enemies to his rest, and so, by close windows and curtains, makes an artificial night to himself within: not a beam appears there, though without the clear day of the Gospel shines round about him. The senses of his soul, as we may call them, are all bound up, and are not *exercised to discern good and evil,* as the Apostle speaks, Heb. v. 14. And his leading faculty, his understanding, is surcharged with sleepy vapours, that arise incessantly from the inferior part of his soul, his perverse affections. Nor hath his mind any other exercise, in this sleepy condition, than the vain business of dreaming. His most refined and wisest thoughts are but mere extravagancies from man's due end, and his greatest contentments nothing but golden dreams. Yet he is serious in them, and no wonder; for who can discern the folly of his own dream till he is awake? He that dreams he eateth, when he awakes, finds *his soul empty,* and not till then. Isa. xxix. 8. Now, while he thus sleeps, his great business lies by; yet spends he his hand-breadth of time as fast, while he is fast asleep, as if he were in continual employment. Judge, then, if it be not needful to bid this man *arise.*

Lastly, this voice may import, that man is spiritually dead. *God* is the life of the soul, as *it* is of the body: while He dwells there, it is both comely and active; but once destitute of His presence, it becomes a carcass, where, besides privation of life and motion, there is a positive filthiness, a putrefaction in the soul, unspeakably worse than that of dead bodies. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* And as dead bodies are removed from the sight of men, dead souls are cast out from the favourable sight of God, till Christ's saying, *Arise*, revives them. The ministers of the word are appointed to cry, *Arise*, indifferently to all that hear them; and Christ hath reserved this privilege and liberty, to join his effective voice when and to whom he pleases. A carnal man may shew his teeth at this; but who is he that can, by any solid reason, charge absurdity upon this way of dispensing outward and inward vocation? I will not here mention their idle cavils. The Scripture is undeniably clear in this, that man is naturally *dead in sin.* The gospel bids him *arise*, and it is Christ that is his life, and that raises him.

Thus we see, in some measure, what it is for men to *arise.* Now being risen, they must *shine*, and that two ways; *jointly and publicly*, as they make up visible churches, and likewise *personally*, in their particular conversation. First, then, what is the shining of the true church? Doth not a church, then, shine, when church service is raised from a decent and primitive simplicity, and decorated with pompous ceremonies, with rich furniture and gaudy vestments? Is not the church, then, beautiful? Yes, indeed; but all the question is, whether this be the proper, genuine beauty or not; whether this be not *strange fire*, as the fire that Aaron's sons used, which became vain, and was taken as strange fire. Methinks it cannot be better decided than to refer it to St. John, in his book of the Revelations. We find there the descriptions of two several women, the *one* riding in state, arrayed in purple, decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearl, ch. xvii.; the *other*, ch. xii., in rich attire too, but of another kind, clothed with the sun, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. The other's decorament was all earthly, this woman's is all celestial. What need has she to borrow light and beauty from precious stones, who is *clothed with the sun*, and crowned with stars? She wears no sublunary ornaments, but, which is more noble, she treads upon them; *the moon is under her feet.* Now, if you know (as you do all, without doubt,) which of these two is the spouse of Christ, you can easily resolve the question. The truth is, those things seem to deck religion, but they undo it. Observe where they are most used, and we shall find little or no substance of devotion under them; as we see in that apostate Church of Rome. This painting is dishonourable for Christ's spouse, and besides, it spoils her natural complexion. The superstitious use of torches and lights in the church by day, is a kind of shining, but surely not that which is commanded here. No; it is an affront done both to the sun in the heaven, and to the Sun of Righteousness in the Church.

What is meant, then, when the Church is commanded to *shine*, or *be enlightened?* These two readings give the entire sense of the word; for, first, having no light of herself, she must *receive light*, and then *shew it;* first, *be enlightened*, and then *shine.* She is enlightened by

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the sphere of the gospel. This is that light that comes to her, and the glory of the Lord that arises upon her. Hence she receives her laws and forms of government, and her shining is, briefly, the pure exercise of those and conformity to them.

And the personal shining of the several members of a church, is, a comely congruity with pure worship and discipline; and it is that which now is most needful to be urged. Every Christian soul is personally engaged first to be enlightened, and then to shine; and we must draw our light for ourselves from that same source that furnishes the Church with her public light. There is a word in the civil law, *Uxor fulget radiis mariti:* The wife shines by the rays of her husband's light. Now every faithful soul is espoused to Christ, and therefore may well shine, seeing the Sun himself is their husband. He adorns them with a double beauty of *justification* and *sanctification:* by *that*, they shine more especially to God, by *this* to men. And may not these two be signified by a double character given to the spouse in Cant. vi. 20? *She is fair as the moon, and clear as the sun.* The lesser light is that of sanctification, *fair as the moon;* that of justification, the greater, by which *she is as clear as the sun.* The sun is perfectly luminous, but the moon is but half enlightened; so, the believer is perfectly justified, but sanctified only in part: his one half, his flesh, is dark; and as the partial illumination is the reason of so many changes in the moon, to which changes the sun is not subject at all, so the imperfection of a Christian's holiness, is the cause of so many waxings and wanings, and of the great inequality in his performances, whereas in the meanwhile his justification remains constantly like itself. *This* is imputed, *that* inherent. The light of Sanctification must begin in the understanding, and from thence be transfused to the affections, the inferior parts of the soul, and from thence break forth and shine into action. This is then the nature of the duties, *Arise and shine.*

II. The universality of the subject, which was the second head, is this, that every man that knows Christ, is here engaged to *shine* too. Neither grandeur exempts from the duty of shining, nor doth meanness exclude from the privilege of shining. Men of low condition in this world need not despair of it, for it is a spiritual act; great men need not despise it, for it is a noble act, to shine by Christ's light. In the third verse of this chapter it is said to the Church, *Kings shall come to the brightness of thy rising.* To what end, but to partake of her light and shine with her? And indeed, the regal attire of Christ's righteousness, and the white robes of holiness, will exceedingly well become kings and princes. *Give the king thy judgments, O Lord, and thy righteousness to the king's son.*

III. The third and last thing propounded, was the force of the reason; that *Christ's presence* engages to *arise and shine.* Wherein it is supposed that Christ, declared in the Gospel, is the *light* which is said here to *come*, and the *glory of the Lord* which is said to be *risen;* so that now it should be more amply cleared, how Christ is light and the glory of the Lord, and what his coming and rising is. But of these afterwards. I shall close now with a word of exhortation.

Arise, then, *for the glory of the Lord is risen.* The day of the Gospel is too precious that any of it should be spent in sleep, or idleness, or worthless business. Worthless business detains many of us. *Arise*, immortal souls, from turmoiling in the dust, and working in the clay like Egyptian captives. Address yourselves to more noble work. There is a Redeemer come, who will pay your ransom, and rescue you from such vile service, for more excellent employment. It is strange how the souls of Christians can so much forget their first original from Heaven, and their new hopes of returning thither, and the rich price of their redemption, and forgetting all these dwell so low, and dote so much upon trifles. How is it that they hear not their well beloved's voice crying, *Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away?* Though the eyes of true believers are so enlightened, that they shall not sleep unto death, yet their spirits are often seized with a kind of drowsiness and slumber, and sometimes even when they should be of most activity. The time of Christ's check to his three disciples, made it very sharp, though the words are mild: *What! could you not watch with me one hour?* Shake off, believing souls, that heavy humour. *Arise*, and satiate the eye of faith with the contemplation of Christ's beauty, and follow after him till you attain the place of full enjoyment. And you others who never yet saw him, *arise*, and admire his matchless excellency. The things you esteem great, appear so but through ignorance of his greatness. His brightness, if you saw it, would obscure to you the greatest splendour of the world, as all those stars that go never down upon us, yet they are swallowed up in the surpassing light of the sun when it arises. *Stand up from the dead, and He shall give you light. Arise and work while it is day, for the night shall come wherein none can work*, says our Saviour himself. Happy are they who rise early in the morning of their youth; for the day of life is very short, and the art of Christianity long and difficult. Is it not a grevious thing, that men never consider why they came into the world, till they be upon the point of going out again, nor think how to live, till they be summoned to die? But most of all unhappy, he who never wakens out of that pleasing dream of false happiness, till he falls into eternal misery. *Arise*, then, betimes, and prevent that sad awakening.

And being risen, *put on your beautiful garments.* Isa. lii. 1. Draw towards you with the hand of faith the rich mantle of Christ's righteousness. *It is time to awake*, says the Apostle, and presently after, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Rom. xiii. 11, 14. And it is a wonder how a sinner can rest, while he is out of this garment; for there is no other in heaven nor on earth, can make him shine to God, and so shelter him from the stroke of justice. Put him on then, and so shine: being thus clothed, thou shalt shine in justification, and likewise in sanctity. What a privilege is it, to be like God! A sanctified conscience, what can be said against it? And first have an enlightened understanding, for that is the proper seat of light. That ignorant zeal which Rome commends, exposes religion to scorn and contempt. Heat without light, is the character of the fire of hell. I know, all are not tied to a like degree of knowledge, but certainly, all are obliged to have a competency, and diligence for increase. Aspire,

then, to be intelligent Christians, and to know well what you believe. Let your minds be *filled with knowledge*, as the Apostle speaks. But let it not stop there; it must have influence into the will. *Lux est vehiculum caloris:* True light conveys heat. All the knowledge that the natural man hath of Christ, not warming his affection to Christ, is but *ignis fatuus*, a vain light, it shall never lead him to happiness. Saving light produces love, and by that acts. *Faith works by love*, says the Apostle. That breaks forth and shines in the life, in godliness, righteousness, and sobriety. Shine, then, in all these; first, in piety towards God, for this is the reflection of those rays of light back toward their source, and this will command the other two. No man that shines in godliness, will wallow in injustice and intemperance. Guile and wrong cannot endure the light: they that are unjust cannot shine. And let them never offer to shine among Christians, who are not sober, but stained with riot and uncleanness. These foul enormities lay waste the conscience, and put out the light. How can any seeds of grace subsist undrowned, that are exposed to a daily deluge of cups? How can that pure Spirit that chose the likeness of a chaste dove, dwell and give light in that soul which is a nest of impure and filthy lusts? No; there can be no fellowship betwixt this celestial light, whereby we should shine, and those infernal workings of darkness. Let profane men hold it a chief strain of wit, to scoff at purity, but you who pretend Heaven-ward in good earnest, and mean to shine in glory, shine here in holiness; *For without holiness no man shall see God.* And do it with these qualifications: (1.) *Constantly*,—in every estate. Let not this Divine light go out, neither by day in prosperity, nor by night in adversity. In every place. Do not shine clear, and be dark in your chamber: they that do thus, *have their reward.* That is a sad word, if rightly understood. Beware of hypocrisy. (2.) Shine *progressively*, gaining still more and more victory over darkness, till you attain unmixed and perfect light. *The way of the just*, says Solomon, *is like a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18. (3.) Shine *humbly*, to His glory whose light you borrow; not to shew forth your own excellences, but His, *who hath called you from darkness to His marvellous light.* 1 Pet. ii. 9. If we be *children of light*, our brightness must praise the *Father of lights. Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works*, (not yourselves, if you can be hid; as the sun affords its light and will scarce suffer us to look upon itself,) *may glorify* (not you, but) *your heavenly Father.* Matt. v. 6. To conclude,

The pure light of the Church is revived, and the glory of the Lord *is* risen upon you, and upon this glory there shall be a defence. If God be your glory in the midst of you, He will be likewise a wall of fire round about you. All the danger is, if we fall short in the duty of shining. But as you desire that this glory should abide and dwell amongst you, let all estates of men provoke one another to shine bright in holiness. You who either by birth or office are in eminent stations, know that you were set there to be eminent and exemplary in shining, as stars of more notable magnitude. You who are ministers of this light, know that *you are the light of the world;* and if the very light become darkness, how great will that darkness be! You that are of a

lower order, know that you must shine too; for it is a common duty. There is a certain company of small stars in the firmament, which, though they cannot be each one severally seen, yet, being many, their united light makes a conspicuous brightness in the heavens, which is called the *milky way*: so, though the shining of every private Christian is not so much severally remarkable, yet, the concourse and meeting of their light together, will make a bright path of holiness shine in the Church.

Now to the end we may each one shine in our measure, we must learn to turn ourselves often towards Him from whom our light is derived. Conversing with Him, will make us more and more like Him. There is a secret unknown virtue for this purpose in secret prayer and meditation. Were we more in the mount with God, our faces would shine more with men. Let us then rescue from the world all the time we can, to resort frequently thither, till such time as the soul, which is now often pulled down again by the flesh, shall let that mantle fall and come down no more, but shine there without spot, and be for ever satisfied with her Maker's image.

SERMON V.

PREFACE.

Art imitates nature; and the nearer it comes to nature in its effects, it is the more excellent. Grace is the new nature of a Christian, and hypocrisy that art which counterfeits it; and the more exquisite it is in imitation, it is the more plausible to men, but the more abominable to God. It may frame a spiritual man in image so to the life, that not only others, but even the hypocrite himself may admire it, and favouring his own artifice, may be deceived so far, as to say, and to think, it lives, and fall in love with it; but he is no less abhorred by the Searcher of hearts, than pleasing to himself. Surely, this mischief of hypocrisy can never be enough inveighed against. When religion is in request, it is the chief malady of the Church, and numbers die of it; though, because it is a subtile and inward evil, it be little perceived. It is to be feared there are many sick of it, who look well and comely in God's outward worship, and they may pass well in good weather, in times of peace, but days of adversity are days of trial. The prosperous estate of the Church makes hypocrites, and her distress discovers them. But if they escape such trial, there is one inevitable day coming, wherein all secret things shall be made manifest. Men shall be turned inside out: and amongst all sinners that shall then be brought before that judgment-seat, the deformedest sight shall be an unmasked hypocrite, and the heaviest sentence shall be *his* portion.

Oh! that the consideration of this would scare us out of that false disguise in time, and set us all upon the study of sincerity! Precious is that grace in God's esteem: a little of it will weigh down mountains of formal religion, in the balance of the sanctuary. Which of us have not now brought hypocrisy, more or less, into the house of

God? Oh, that it were not with intention to nourish it, but with desire to be here cured of it! For He alone who hates it so much, can cure it; He alone can confer upon us that sincerity wherein He mainly delights. If we have a mind, indeed, to be endued with it, it is no where else to be had: we must entreat it of God by humble prayer, in the name of His well-beloved Son, by the assistance of His Holy Spirit.

[SECOND SERMON OF THE TEXT.]

Isaiah lx. 1.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Truly, light is sweet, and it is a pleasing thing to behold the sun, says the Preacher, Eccl. xi. 7. But the interchange of night with day adds to its beauty, and the longest night makes day the welcomest; as that people well know, whose situation in the world gives them a five or six months' night all of one piece. It is reported of some of them, that when they conceive their night draws towards an end, they put on their richest apparel, and climb up to the highest mountains, with emulation who shall first discover the returning light; which, so soon as it appears, they salute with acclamations of joy, and welcome it with solemn feasting, and all other testimonies of exceeding gladness. But such is the lethargy of sinful man, that he stirs not to meet his spiritual light; and, which is worse, when it comes upon him, it finds him in love with darkness. Instead of his shouts of joy for this light, many a cry must be sounded in his ears, to awaken him; and it is well, too, if at length he hear and obey this voice, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come.* It is clear that the words contain a *command*, and the *reason* of it: the *command* to a twofold act; the *reason* under two expressions, proportionately different. Good reason the Church should *arise*, when the *Lord's glory is risen upon her;* and it is very congruous she should be *enlightened* and *shine*, when *her light is come.* Of those two acts, or duties, somewhat was formerly spoken; and the reason likewise was made use of so far as relative to those duties, and tending to their enforcement. But the meaning of the phrases in which the reason is expressed, was rather, at that time, supposed, than either duly proved or illustrated; so that it will be now expedient to consider, simply in themselves, these latter words: *Thy light is come,* and, *The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

So far as this prophecy hath respect to the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, that temporal deliverance, and the ensuing peace and prosperity, was their *light*, and that Divine power by which it was effected, was this *glory of the Lord.* And, indeed, both these expressions are frequently used in such a sense in holy writ. *When I waited for light, there came darkness,* says Job, ch. xxx. ver. 26. So Isaiah lviii. 8, and many other places. And *the glory of the Lord*, is used for a singular effect of His power, John xi. 40, Isaiah lx. 18, and elsewhere. But this literal sense is but a step

to elevate the Prophet to a sight of Christ's spiritual kingdom; which is usual with him, as our Saviour himself testifies of another of his prophecies: *These things said Isaiah when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* John xii. 41. It was a sight of that same glory, that makes him say, *Thy light is come.*

In these words, there are three things concerning Christ, represented to the Church's view. *First*, His beauty and excellency, in that he is called *light*, and *the glory of the Lord*. *Secondly*, The Church's propriety and interest in him, *thy light*, and *risen upon thee*; which hath a restrictive emphasis, as the very next verse doth clearly manifest. As he is *originally* the glory of the Lord, and the light of the Lord, *lumen de lumine*, so he is, *communicatively*, the Church's light, and her glory too, as it is expressed in the 19th verse of the same chapter, *Thy God, thy glory*. Thus hath she both His worth, and her own right in Him, to consider. *Thirdly*, His presence, or her actual possession, *He is come, and is risen.* And in these, the Church and each faithful soul may find a double spring of affection, the one of love, the other of joy. The transcendent beauty of Christ makes him the choicest object of love, and her property in him, or title to him, together with possession, is the proper cause of solid joy.

First, then, this excellency is expressed by those two characters, *light* and *the glory of the Lord*. Concerning which, it will be fit both to demonstrate that they are the proper titles of Christ, and here to be taken for him; as also, to shew what they signify in him.

Indeed the Apostle, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, (ch. iii.) insists much in extolling both *the light* and *the glory* of the Gospel, and in the 4th verse of the next chapter, speaks of *the light of the glorious Gospel*, but he immediately intimates whence it hath this light and glory: *The glorious Gospel of Christ*, says he, *who is the image of God.* So that it is most unnecessary to inquire whether the Messiah, or the word that reveals him, be rather here couched under these terms of *light* and *the glory of the Lord*. These two agree so well together, and these words agree so well with them both, that it were an injury to attempt to sever them. All the difference will be this; Christ is that incomplex and substantial light, the Gospel that complex light wherein he appears. But, (not to be guilty of *dark* terms, especially in a discourse of *light*,) I take it, in this resemblance, Christ is the sun, and the Gospel his proper sphere or heaven, wherein he gives light to his Church. He is *primarily* the glory of the Lord, and the Gospel is so by *participation*, because it declares him: so that much of that which shall be spoken here of Christ, will be secondarily to be understood of the Gospel of Christ.

That Christ is *Light*, the Scripture speaks abundantly. His own voice concerning himself, notwithstanding the cavil of the Pharisees, is above all exception, for he is truth itself: *I am the light of the world*, saith he; *he that follows me shall not walk in darkness.* John viii. 12. The Father who sent him, gives him the same title: *I will give thee for a light of the Gentiles*, Isa. xlii. 6; and xlix. 6. And not to multiply citations of the prophets and evangelists, who with one consent all magnify this Light, take the true testimony of a false prophet; and, indeed, the favourable witness of an adversary is strongest: it is

that of Balaam, who saw that Christ was *light*, though, because he saw him afar off, (as he says himself,) and had not his eye fortified, like the true prophets, he discerned him but as a star: *There shall come a star out of Jacob.* Numb. xxiv. 17. But what need we go so far, to be certified what this light and glory of the Lord is? The Lord of glory himself, in the very next verse to the text, assures us of it: *Upon thee shall the Lord arise.* And in the 19th verse, *The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.*

By this time, I hope, it is clear, that the Eternal Son of God, co-essential with His Father, was He who gave accomplishment to this prophecy, by appearing to the world wrapped up in the darkness of human nature. He is that *day-spring from on high*, which *hath visited us*, as old Zacharias speaks, Luke i. 78.

Among all created excellencies, none can be borrowed more fitly representing Christ than that of *light*. And is it not Christ that decks his Church with supernatural beauty, and makes it indeed Κόσμος, a comely world, called out of the world? But the manifold agreement of light with Christ, doth require more particular consideration.

Light is (as they call it) *primum visibile*, the first object of sight. And Jesus Christ, whom the Apostle styles *God over all, blessed for ever*, is, *primum intelligibile*, the prime object of the understanding. What is then become of that Divine spark, that understanding soul, which the Father of spirits breathes into these bodies, that all our thoughts creep here below, and leave their chief and noblest object unconsidered? Which of us may not complain, (though few of us do,) that our souls have either no wings to elevate themselves to the contemplation of Him from whom they issued, or, if they make attempts at it, our affections, engaged to the world, make us, like a bird tied by the foot, fall presently down again into the mire? It is high time to leave hunting shadows, and to turn our internal eye to the beholding of this Uncreated Light.

In this elementary world, Light being (as we hear) the first thing visible, all things are seen by it, and it by itself. Thus is Christ among spiritual things, in the elect world of his Church. *All things are made manifest by the Light*, says the Apostle, Ephes. v. 13, speaking of Christ, as the following verse doth evidently testify. It is in his word that he shines, and makes it a directing and convincing light, to discover all things that concern his Church and himself, and to be known by its own brightness. How impertinent, then, is that question so much tossed by the Romish Church, How know you the Scriptures (say they) to be the word of God, without the testimony of the Church? I would ask one of them again, how they can know that it is day-light, except some one light a candle to let them see it. They are little versed in Holy Scripture, who know not that it is frequently called *light*; and they are senseless who know not that light is seen and known by itself. *If our Gospel be hid*, says the Apostle, *it is hid to them that perish, the god of this world having blinded their minds against the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 3. No wonder if such stand in need of a testimony. A blind man knows not that it is light at noon-day, but by report; but to those that have eyes, light is seen by itself.

Again, Light makes all other things that are in themselves visible, to become actually visible, as they speak: so, by the word of this substantial *Word*, Jesus Christ, all things in religion are tried and discovered. The very authority of the Church, which they obtrude so confidently, must be stopped and examined by these Scriptures, which they would make stand to its courtesy. Doctrines and worship must be tried by this light; and what will not endure this trial, must not be endured in the House of God. *To the law and to the testimony*, says the Prophet, *if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* Isa. viii. 20. The rays of Christ's light are displayed through both his Testaments, and in them we see him.

But Oh, how sublime is the knowledge of him! No one is ignorant that there is light, yet, what light is, few know; the best wits are troubled to define it: so, all that bear the name of Christians acknowledge that Christ *is*, but to know *what* he is, is of marvellous difficulty. In a speculative way, unsoundable is the depth of his nature and properties. *And his generation who can declare?* says our Prophet, Isa. liii. 8. I define not, whether his eternal generation be meant, or his incarnation in time. These are mysteries that shall hold the very angels busy in admiration for ever. And as for experimental knowledge by faith, how small is the number of those that are truly acquainted with it!

Again, Light fitly resembles Christ in *purity:* it visits many impure places, and lights upon the basest parts of the earth, and yet remains most pure and undefiled. Christ sees and takes notice of all the enormities and sinful pollutions in the world; as David says of the sun, *there is nothing hid from his beams;* yea, many of those foul evils he cures, and purgeth away these pollutions; and yet, he is never stained by them in the least degree. He is a physician not capable of infection, and therefore while he dwelt among men, he shunned not publicans and sinners, but sought them rather, for with such was his business and employment. Indeed, for a frail man to be too bold in frequenting profane and obstinate persons, though with intention to reclaim them, is not always so safe. *Metus est ne attrahant.* They may pull him in, who would help them forth, and pollute him who would cleanse them. But our Saviour, the light of the world, runs no such hazard: he is stronger than the perversest sinner, yea, than the prince of darkness himself, over whom his banners are always victorious, and purer than to be in danger of pollution. His precious blood is *a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness:* sinners are purified by it, and it is not defiled by them. Thousands have washed in it, yet it shall abide, and always shall be most perfectly pure. *And such a high priest was needful for us, who is* ἀμίαντος, *undefiled*, and who, though conversant with sinners, to communicate to them his goodness, was yet *separate from sinners* in immunity from their evil. Heb. vii. 26.

To this agrees well that title which the prophet Malachi gives him, chap. iv. ver. 2, when he calls him the *Sun of Righteousness;* full of purity and righteousness, as the sun is of light; all luminous, without spot; subject to no eclipse in himself, his light being his own, though our sins interposed may hide him sometimes from us, as those real eclipses in the sun are rather ours, for we are deprived of light, but not of the sun. Christ is in many ways most fitly called the Sun; for

since all created light falls infinitely short of his worth, the prince and chief of lights, the sun, cannot but suit best, so far as may be, to set forth his excellency.

The light of the sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many several people and nations that behold it at one time; nor is the righteousness of this Sun of Righteousness either lessened to himself, or to individual believers, by many partaking of it at once: it is wholly conferred upon each one of them, and remains whole in himself. Hence it is, that not only Christ invites so liberally sinners to come to him, but even justified persons would so gladly draw all others to lay hold on this righteousness of their Redeemer; knowing well, that if all the world were enriched by it, they themselves would be no wit the poorer.

Again, the sun hath a vivifying power, not only upon plants and vegetables, but, if philosophers be right, *Sol et homo generant hominem*, it hath a special influence in the generation of man. But it is both more certainly and more eminently true of this Sun we speak of, in man's regeneration; that he is the proper and principal efficient of it. The Evangelist calls him at once, *The light and the life of men.* John i. 4. To say nothing of him as a treasure, he is the source of our spiritual life and motion.

When the sun takes its course towards us in the season of the year, it drives away the sharp frosts and the heavy fogs of winter, it clears the heavens, decks the earth with variety of plants and flowers, and awakes the birds to the pleasant strains of their natural music. When Christ, after a kind of winter absence, returns to visit a declining church, admirable is the change that he produces: all begins to flourish by his sweet influence; his house, his worship, his people, are all clothed with a new beauty; but it is spiritual, and therefore, none but spiritual eyes can discern it. When he will thus return, all the power and policy of man can no more hinder him, than it could stay the course of the sun in its circle. In like manner, a deserted, forsaken soul, that can do nothing but languish and droop, while Christ withdraws himself, what inexpressible vigour and alacrity finds it at his returning! Then those graces which, while they lurked, seemed to have been lost and quite extinguished, bud forth anew with pleasant colour and fragrant smell. It is the light of His countenance that banisheth their false fears, that strengthens their faith, and cures their spiritual infirmities. This Sun is indeed the sovereign physician: *Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing under his wings.* Mal. iv. 2.

Finally, all darkness flies away before Him: it was His arising in the world that made the day break and the shadows fly away. The types and shadows of the Law were then abolished. It was His light that dispelled the mists of ignorance and idolatry, and He alone delivers the soul from the night of sin and misery produced by it. All the stars, and the moon with them, cannot make it day in the world; this is the sun's prerogative: nor can nature's highest light, the most refined science and morality, make it day in the soul: for this is Christ's.

The common light of reason, every man that comes into the world

hath from Him as His Creator; but the special light of grace, they alone who are *born again*, have from Him as their Saviour. Gross is the darkness of every natural mind, till Christ enlighten it: it can neither discern nor *receive* the things of God, *ου δεχεται. Ye were darkness*, says the Apostle, *but now are ye light in the Lord.* Ephes. v. 8. The natural mind is nothing else but a mass of darkness; and the companion of darkness, is confusion, as it was in the mass of the world before light was created. And what is there under heaven more confused than a carnal mind; the affections quite out of order, and though all naught, yet, sometimes fighting one with another, and continually hurrying the judgment whither they please? Now, to dissipate this darkness, and remedy this confusion, Christ shines externally in his word. But too much daily experience testifies, that this is not sufficient: therefore, to those whom he will make children of the light, to meet with this outward light of his word, he gives another internal light by the Spirit. The sun can make dark things clear, but it cannot make a blind man see them: but herein is the excellency of this Sun, that He illuminates not only the *object*, but the *faculty;* doth not only reveal the mysteries of his kingdom, but opens blind eyes to behold them. And the first lineament of the renewed image of God in man, is that light in the understanding, removing not only that simple ignorance of Divine things, but those misconceits, likewise, and false principles, and that wicked pertinacity, whereof man's mind is naturally full. He who *at first commanded light to shine out of darkness*, infuseth saving *knowledge and light* into the dark soul of man. And this light (as was said) kindles love. It is *vehiculum caloris*, hath a powerful influence, begetting heat in the affections. Nor can this Divine light be ever again fully extinguished, but conducts the soul that hath received it, till it be received to the land of light and perfect happiness. Thus, in our Redeemer is *the fountain of life*, as the Psalmist speaks, and *in his light do we see light.* Psalm xxxvi. 9.

He is likewise here styled, *The glory of the Lord.* In 2 Sam. iv. the ark of God is called *the glory*, but it enjoyeth that name as a type of Christ, in whom now that which the ark contained is fulfilled. The tabernacle is called *the dwelling of God's glory*, Psal. xxvi. 8, likewise typifying Him, in the tabernacle of whose human nature that glory dwells far more excellently. John i. 14. *Εσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, He dwelt in a tabernacle among us, and we saw his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.* The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, calls him *ἀπαύγασμα, the brightness of his Father's glory and the character of His person.* Heb. i. 3. And under these expressions lies that remarkable mystery of the Son's eternal relation to the Father, which is rather humbly to be adored than boldly to be explained, either by God's perfect understanding of His own essence, or by any other notion. It is true, he is called *The wisdom of the Father*, but this wisdom is too wonderful for us. He is called *The Word*, but what this word means, I think, we shall not well know till we see him face to face, and contemplate him in the light of glory. Meanwhile we may see him to be *the glory of the Lord*, in a safer way, and in a sufficient measure to guide us to that clear vision

reserved above for us. *We saw his glory*, says that sublime Evangelist. But how could this excellent glory be seen by sinful men, and not astonish and strike dead the beholders? *He was made flesh and dwelt among us*, says he, *and* so *we saw his glory*. That majesty which we could never have looked upon, he veiled with human flesh, that we might not die, yea, live, by seeing him. There he stood behind the wall, and shewed himself through the lattice. *In him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead*, Col. ii. 9, but it was σωματικῶς, *bodily:* for who could have endured the splendour of the Godhead's fulness, if that cloud of his body had not been drawn betwixt? And through it did shine that grace and truth, that wisdom and power, in the work of our redemption, whereby he was clearly manifested to be *the glory of the Lord*.

Surely, we need not now ask the Church, or a believing soul, *What is thy beloved more than another?* Or if we do, well may she answer, *He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;* for he is *the light of the world*, and *the glory of the Lord*. Let not the numerous titles of earthly potentates be once admitted into comparison with these. If we believe David, Psal. lxii. 9, the stateliest things and persons in the world, being balanced with *vanity* itself, are found lighter than *it:* and shall we offer to weigh them with Christ? If we knew him rightly, we would not sell the least glance or beam of this light of his countenance, for the highest favour of mortal man, though it were constant and unchangeable, which it is not. It is ignorance of Christ, that maintains the credit of those vanities we admire. The Christian that is truly acquainted with him, enamoured with the brightness of his beauty, can generously trample upon the smilings of the world with the one foot, and upon her frownings with the other. If he be rich or honourable, or both, yet, he glories not in that, but Christ, who is *the glory of the Lord*, is even then his chiefest glory; and the light of Christ obscures that worldly splendour in his estimation. And as the enjoyment of Christ overtops all his other joys, so it overcomes his griefs. As that great light drowns the light of prosperity, so it shines bright in the darkness of affliction: no dungeon so close that it can keep out the rays of Christ's love from his beloved prisoners. The world can no more take away this light, than it can give it. *Unto the just ariseth light in darkness*, says the Psalmist; and *When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me*, says the Church, Mic. vii. 8. And as this light is a *comfort*, so it is likewise a *defence*, which suffers no more of distress to come near the godly, than is profitable for them. Therefore we find very frequently in Scripture, where this light and glory is mentioned, protection and safety jointly spoken of: *The Lord is my light, and withal my salvation: whom shall I fear?* says David, Psal. xxvii. 1. *The Lord is a sun, and He is a shield too.* Psal. lxxxiv. 21. And truly I think him shot-proof that hath the sun for his buckler. And for glory, *Upon all the glory shall be a defence*, says our Prophet, ch. iv. ver. 5. And the prophet Zechariah, where he calls the Lord the Church's *glory in the midst of her*, calls him likewise, *a wall of fire round about her*, ch. ii. ver. 4. The only way, then, to be safe, is to keep this light and the glory entire. To part with any part of this glory, is to make a breach in that wall of fire; and if that be a means of safety, let all men

judge. No, keep it whole, and then they must come through the fire, who will assault you. Nor is this light only defensive of the church that embraceth it, but it is likewise destructive of all adverse powers. See a clear testimony for this in Isa. x. 17, 18. *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame, and* (speaking there of the Assyrians) *it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day, and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body, and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.* Let ever then the Church of God entirely observe this *light* and *glory of the Lord;* and she shall undoubtedly be preserved by it.

But to close in a word, first, to those who know this light, and then, to those who are yet strangers to it.

You who know Christ, glory in him perpetually. Well may He be your glory, when he is the glory of the Lord. There are some who pretend love to Christ, and yet, a taunting word of some profane miscreant will almost make them ashamed of him. How would they die for Christ, who are so tender as not to endure a scoff for him? Where is that spirit of Moses, who accounted the very *reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?* Heb. xi. 26. Oh, learn to glory in Christ; think highly of him, and speak so too. Methinks it is the discourse in the world that becomes Christians best, to be speaking one to another honourably of Jesus Christ. And of all men, the preachers of his gospel should be most frequent in this subject. This should be their great theme, to extol and commend the Lord Jesus, that they may inflame many hearts with his love; and best can they do this, who are most strongly taken with this love themselves. Such will most gladly abase themselves, that Christ may be magnified; and whatsoever be their excellencies, they will still account Christ their glory. And they are richly repaid, for he accounts them his glory. This would seem a strange word, if it were not the Apostle's: *They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.* 2 Cor. viii. 23. Delight who will, either in sloth or ignorance on the one hand, or in vain speculations and strains of frothy wit on the other; surely, those preachers only shall be approved in the great day, who have constantly endeavoured, in their measure, to speak the best and fittest they could for their Master's advantage. And happy those Christians, of what estate so ever, who in all estates make Christ their glory, and in all actions have their eye fixed upon his glory, who is their light and the glory of the Lord!

Now to those who are strangers to him, (Would to God none that are to be spoken to, were such!) to them, I say, notice is given both of the excellency and the necessity of Christ. Though it were possible to grope the way to happiness in the dark, yet, none will deny but to be conducted thither by a constant light is both more safe and more delightful. But were there any possibility of attaining that end without this light, the neglect of it were not altogether so strange. The wonder of all is this, that Christ alone being both that *life*, and the *way* to it, and the *truth*, or light, that guides in that way, (John xiv. 6,) yet Christians (so called) should esteem and look after him as little as if he were wholly needless! What meanest thou, O besotted

sinner? Is it so light a thing to die in thy sins, and to die eternally for them, that thou wilt not so much as open and admit the light of salvation? What wilt thou pretend in that terrible day? Though all other kinds of people should offer some excuse, thou who hast heard the Gospel, shalt be speechless. For not only shall the rigour of justice condemn thee, but mercy itself shall plead against thee; for thou hast despised it. That light did come and was not embraced, shall be the main condemnation. How many thousands who make no doubt of Heaven, yet shall then fall short of it! It is not a superficial profession, that will then pass current. It is not some public sighs and groans from an unsanctified heart, which either come from custom, or some present touch of the word, nor yet is it some sudden risings of inward affection towards Christ, upon the report of his worth, that shall then serve the turn. The intellective knowledge of Christ, the distinct understanding, yea, the orthodox preaching of his Gospel, the maintaining of his public cause, and suffering for it, shall not then be found sufficient. Only that peculiar apprehension of Christ, those constant flames of spiritual love, that even course of holy walking in his light, shall be those characters whereby Christ shall own his children, and admit them into the inheritance of perfect light. One of the speakers in the book of Job, discoursing of the prosperity of the ungodly, calls it but *his candle*, and tells how long it can last: *his candle* (says he) *shall be put out with him.* And that's the longest term of it: if it last his lifetime, it shall convey him no further; he goes into eternity in the dark, and therefore, as St. John says, he knows not whither he goeth. *Quò nunc abibis?* said that Emperor [Adrian] to his soul. Is it not a sad thing, when the soul that knows no other than worldly light, must take leave of it, and enter into eternal darkness, there to be incessantly tormented with present anguish, and the frightful expectation of the last judgment, when it must take again that body which was the accomplice of its wickedness, to be partaker of its punishment; when it shall have a double misery, to behold crowns of immortality distributed to the godly, after the short combats of this life, and itself thrust out among the devils? Then shall all men be in some way sensible, what is the worth of this now contemned *light*, the Lord Jesus Christ; the greatest number too late, for they shall be banished from it for ever. But the righteous shall then most perfectly know, and for ever enjoy this light and glory of the Lord. *To whom, with the Father of lights, and the Spirit of grace, be eternity of praise and honour.*

SERMON VI.

PREFACE.

WHAT *shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* said our Saviour, who was to lay down a ransom for it, and knew well that it would cost infinitely more than the world was worth. Yet, the most of men value their own souls at a far lower rate than the

whole world, losing them for broken morsels of it: yea, many times for vain hopes that are never accomplished. And as these men make a miserable bargain, so on the contrary, they that lose the world, or any thing worldly, yea, though it were the whole, to save their souls, make a profitable loss of it. Nature teaches men to hazard and lose all for the life of the body rather than lose it, (although it proves many times very uncomfortable by the loss of these outward things,) and yet, the most part of men pass their whole life-time without one serious thought of the excellency and importance of their souls, whose life and happiness is of a higher nature, and neither consists in, nor depends upon, any thing here below. Hence it is, that while they use the helps of this present life, and the defences of it when it is in danger, and use them with so much diligence and attention, the means of that better life of their better part, their souls, they either use not at all, or so slightly and coldly that they never find salvation in them. You may find it some way in yourselves: the threatenings and preparations of men against you, have awakened and roused you more to think upon means of your temporal safety; but how few are sensible and afraid of the wrath of God, who, as our Saviour tells us, can kill both body and soul, and cast them into hell! You want not frequent advertisement from the word of God, so plentifully preached, that many are perishing, one part in gross ignorance of God, another in profane and licentious living, and the greatest part in a formal and lifeless profession of religion, without the power of it; and yet, where are they who lay it to heart, and bestir themselves to rescue their souls from destruction? Certainly, whatsoever men profess, it is unbelief that is the cause of impenitence. Men are not convinced of the purity of God's nature, nor sensible of the impurity of their own; therefore they apply not themselves in good earnest to the work of repentance, and to reformation, the liveliest part of it. Labour, then, for a more active and practical knowledge of God and Divine truths, such as may humble and renew your souls; not only that you may be delivered from outward troubles that threaten you, but much more, that you may escape the wrath to come. And because neither the word preached, nor judgments, nor mercies that are set before you, are sufficient to quicken a dead soul, or soften a hard heart, without the effectual concurrence of the Spirit of God, let us have recourse to the throne of grace, by humble and earnest prayer, in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ.

Psalm xlii. 8.

Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards, saith Eliphaz, Job v. 7. And as it is the corruption and sinfulness of his birth and nature, that has exposed him to trouble, so nature usually sets him at work, to look out for such things as may preserve and deliver him from trouble, or, at least, mitigate and temper the bitterness of it. And because there is not any one worldly thing that hath either

certainty or sufficiency enough to serve at all times, therefore, worldly and natural men are forced to make use of variety, and are but badly served with them all. The believing soul hath but one comfort whereon he relies, but it is a great one, which alone weighs down all the rest. *Bread strengthens, and wine makes glad the heart of man*, Psal. civ. 15. But *God is the strength of my heart*, says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxiii. 26, and the *gladness* of it too: *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than they have when their corn and wine increaseth.* Psal. vi. 7. And therefore, while the rest are seeking after some scattered crumbs of goodness in the creatures, and saying, *Who will shew us any good?* He fixes his choice upon this one thing, *the light of God's countenance.* And it is the constant assurance of this, that upholds him. *Waves* beat upon him, yea, and *go over him; yet, the Lord will command his loving kindness* to shine upon him.

In this Psalm we may perceive the Psalmist full of perplexed thoughts, and that betwixt strong desires and griefs, and yet, in the midst of them, now and then, some advantage, and intermixing strains of hope with his sad complaints: for immediately before, we heard nothing but the impetuous noise of many waters, *deep calling unto deep*, in the former verse; we have here, as it were, a touch of the sweet sound of David's harp: *Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night His song shall be with me.*

In the words we have *David's confidence* and *David's purpose:* the one suiting very well with the other. *His confidence* in God's loving-kindness: *Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness.* And his *purpose: And in the night his song shall be with me.*

It is true, the latter words, *In the night His song shall be with me*, may be taken as a part of the expression of his confidence, taking the *song* for the matter or subject of the song, the *goodness of God:* as if he should say, Both in the day and in the night, I shall find the sweet fruits of God's favour and loving kindness. But not excluding that, I rather take it to be intended as his *resolution*, that it should be his custom, in the quiet season of the night, to look back upon God's goodness manifested to him in the actions and occurrences of the day; and thus entertaining his soul with that secret discourse, he would stir it up to the praises of his God, and withal would join prayer for the continuance and further manifestation of it. David (as was hinted before) intermixes strains of hope, not that faint and common hope of *possibility* or *probability*, that after stormy days it may be better with him, but a *certain hope* that shall never make *ashamed;* such a *hope* as springs from *faith*, yea, in effect, is one with it. Faith rests upon the goodness and truth of Him who hath promised, and Hope, raising itself upon faith so established, stands up and looks out to the future accomplishment of the promise. Therefore the Apostle calls Faith, *the substance of things hoped for*, ὑπόστασις, *and the evidence of things not seen.* Heb. xi. 1. Of all other hope it is *true, Spes est nomen boni incerti*: It is the name of uncertain good. But this can say, *The Lord will command his loving kindness.*

The Lord will command. What a sudden change is here! Would you think this were the same man that was even now almost overwhelmed? Thus faith always conquers, though seldom, or never,

without a hard conflict; not only assaulted by troubles without, but, which is worse, by incredulity within; nor assaulted only, but many times brought under; yet does it not succumb and give over, knowing that even after many foils, yet, in the end, it shall overcome.

His *confidence* you may consider, first, *oppositely*, and then *positively*, or simply in itself. Oppositely both to his present trouble, and to his complaints, wherein this trouble is expressed; and that is fitly implied, though it be not in the original.

Though the multitude and weight of Job's afflictions did force out of him some bitter words, and made him look back upon the day of his birth, and curse it; yet, faith recovers him from his distemper, and makes him look forward with joy, even as far as to the blessed day of his resurrection: *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet, in my flesh shall I see God.* Job xix. 25. The former words of impatience he spake indeed, but he adheres to *these*, and wishes that they were *written with an iron pen, and engraven to abide for ever.* Therefore we hear of him again in Scripture, as a *righteous* and *patient* man, but of these words of his impatience, not a word. In the lxxviith Psalm, what sad expostulations are those the Psalmist uses, *Will he be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up His tender mercies?* But see how he corrects them, ver, 10: *Then I said, this is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.* Thus Jonah (ch. ii. ver. 3, 4) speaks in a strain much like this; but there it was literally true, that God had *cast* him *into the deep.* And here, *deep calls unto deep*, yet, in the midst of those deeps, faith is not drowned; you see it lifts up its head above water; *Yet the Lord will command*, &c. Yea, though it takes particular notice of God's hand in the affliction, yet it goes not to another hand for comfort: it is *Thy* waves and *Thy* billows, yet that same God whose waves are like to destroy me, will ere long *command His loving-kindness to shine upon me.* So Job xiii. 15. *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.* A wonderful expression of faith! He says not, Though he afflict me sore, but, Though He *slay* me; not Though evil men or Satan should do it, but, Though *He* slay me, yet will I trust in *Him*. What troubled mind can imagine any thing harder against itself, than this?

1. Learn, then, to check those excessive doubts and fears, by some such resolute word as this. Turn the promise, first upon thyself, and then upon God. Consider that He hath promised life eternal to believers, and then say, Though I saw His hand as it were lifted up to destroy me, yet from that very hand will I expect salvation; for I have His word engaged for it, that if I believe, I shall be saved. I do not say, that a soul under temptation can assure itself that God is already reconciled to it; and herein possibly lies oftentimes the mistake; for this reflex act of assurance, though it be our duty to seek after it, is itself rather a gift and reward than a duty. But the direct and proper act of faith, is of perpetual use and necessity, and then most when there is least sense of assurance. And it is no other than a

recumbency or reliance, a rolling over of the soul upon free mercy. That which breeds us much perplexity, is, that we would invert God's order. If I knew, say some, that the promise belonged to *me*, and that Christ were a Saviour to *me*, I could believe. That is to say, I would first see, and then believe. But the true method is just contrary. *I had fainted*, says David, *unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord.* He believed it first, and saw it afterwards. And in this same Psalm, labouring to still his disquieted soul by elevating it above his troubles to look upon his God, he says to it, *Hope in Him now*, and, ere it be long, *thou shalt praise Him for the help of His countenance*, even while His countenance is withheld. And thus faith ought to triumph over spiritual fears and difficulties.

2. How incongruous is it, that outward dangers or trials should over-match it! Will you trust God upon His word, for salvation and eternal happiness, and be diffident for the safety and needful blessings of this temporal life, which life, in comparison, is but for a moment, and the best things of it but dross? Consider that you dishonour faith exceedingly, and degenerate from the believing saints of former ages. Indeed, the promises of this life and that which concerns it, though godliness hath them, yet, they are not so absolute, nor are they so absolutely needful for you. But considering the wisdom and love of your Heavenly Father, learn to compose your minds by it.

I will not be afraid, though ten thousands of the people set themselves against me round about, says David. Psal. iii. 6. And lest you think him singular, in the 46th Psalm, it is the joint voice of the whole Church of God: *We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea: though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God: the holy place of the tabernacle of the most high God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.* That is the way to be immoveable in the midst of troubles, as a rock amidst the waves. When God is in the midst of a kingdom or city, He makes it firm as Mount Sion, that cannot be removed. When He is in the midst of the soul, though calamities throng about it on all hands, and roar like the billows of the sea, yet, there is a constant calm within, such a peace as the world can neither give nor take away. On the other side, what is it but want of lodging God in the soul, and that in His stead the world is in the midst of men's hearts, that makes them shake like the leaves of trees at every blast of danger? What a shame is it, seeing natural men, by the strength of nature, and by help of moral precepts, have attained such undaunted resolution and courage against outward changes, that yet they who would pass for Christians, are so soft and fainting, and so sensible of the smallest alterations! The advantage that we have in this regard is infinite. What is the best ground-work of a philosopher's constancy, but as moving sands in comparison of the Rock that we may build upon? But the truth is, that either we make no provision of faith for times of trial, or, if any we have, we neither know the worth nor the use of it, but lay it by, as a dead unprofitable thing, when we should most use and exercise it. Notwithstanding all our frequenting of God's house, and our plausible profession, is it not

too true, that the most of us either do not at all furnish ourselves with those spiritual arms that are so needful in the militant life of a Christian, or we learn not how to handle them, and are not in readiness for service? As was the case of that improvident soldier, whom his commander found mending some piece of his armour, when they were to give battle. It were not amiss, before afflictions overtake us, to try and train the mind somewhat by supposing the very worst and hardest of them; to say, What if the waves and billows of adversity were swelled and flowing in upon me: could I then believe? God hath said, *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, with a heap of negations: *In no wise, I will not.* He hath said, *When thou passest through the fire and through the water, I will be with thee.* These I know and can discourse of them; but could I repose and rest upon them in the day of trial? Put your souls to it. Is there any thing or person that you esteem and love exceedingly? Say, *What if I should lose this?* Is there some evil that is naturally more contrary and terrible to you than many others? Spare not to present that to the imagination too, and labour to make faith master of it beforehand in case it should befall you; and if the first thought of it scare you, look upon it the oftener, till the visage of it become familiar to you, that you start and scare no more at it. Nor is there any danger in these thoughts. Troubles cannot be brought the nearer by our thus thinking on them; but you may be both safer and stronger by breathing and exercising of your faith in supposed cases. But if you be so tender spirited, that you cannot look upon calamities so much as in thought or fancy, how would you be able for a real encounter? No, surely. But the soul that hath made God his stay, can do both. See it in that notable resolution of the Prophet, Hab. iii. 17: *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength.* And in that of David, Psal. xxiii. 4: *Yea*, says he, *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.* You see how faith is a cork to his soul, keeping it from sinking in the deeps of afflictions. Yea, that big word which one says of his morally just man, is true of the believer: *Si fractus illabatur orbis—Though the very fabric of the world were falling about him, yet would he stand upright and undaunted in the midst of its ruins.*

In this *confidence*, considered in itself, we may observe, 1. The *Object* of it; *The loving kindness of the Lord.* 2. The manner or way by which he expects to enjoy it. *The Lord will command it.* 3. The time; *In the day.*

1. The object: *His loving kindness.* He says not, *The Lord will command my return to the house of God*, or, *will accomplish my deliverance from the heavy oppression and sharp reproaches of the enemy*, which would have answered more particularly and expressly to his present griefs, but, *will command His loving kindness.* And the reason of his thus expressing himself, I conceive to be twofold. [1.] In the assurance of this, is necessarily comprised the certainty of all other

good things. This special favour and benignity of the Lord doth engage His power and wisdom (both which you know are infinite) to the procurement of every thing truly good for those whom He so favours. Therefore it is, that David chooses rather to name the streams of particular mercies in this their living Source and Fountain, than to specify them severally. Nor is it only thus more compendious, but the expression is fuller too, which are the two great advantages of speech. And this I take to be the other reason: [2.] A man may enjoy great deliverances, and many positive benefits from the hand of God, and yet have no share in *His loving kindness*. How frequently doth God heap riches, and honour, and health, on those He hates, and the common gifts of the mind too, wisdom and learning, yea, the common gifts of His own Spirit, and give a fair and long day of external prosperity to those on whom He never vouchsafed the least glance of His favourable countenance! Yea, on the contrary, He gives all those specious gifts to them with a secret curse! As He gave a king in wrath to His people, so He often gives kingdoms in His wrath to kings. Therefore David looks higher than the very kingdom which God promised him and gave him, when he speaks of *His loving kindness*. In a word, he resolves to solace himself with the assurance of this, though he was stripped of all other comforts, and to quiet his soul herein, till deliverance should come; and when it should come, and whatsoever mercies with it, to receive them as fruits and effects of this *loving kindness:* not prizing them so much for themselves, as for the impressions of that love which is upon them. And it is that image and superscription that both engages and moves him most to pay his tribute of praise. And truly, this is everywhere David's temper: his frequent distresses and wants never excite him so much to desire any particular comfort in the creature, as to entreat the presence and favour of God Himself. His saddest times are when, to his sense, this favour is eclipsed. *In my prosperity I said, I shall not be moved.* And what was his adversity that made him of another mind? *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* This verifies his position in that same Psalm, *In thy favour is life.* Thus, in the 63rd Psalm, at the beginning, *My soul thirsteth for Thee, in a dry land where there is no water:* not for water, where there is none, but, *for Thee where there is no water.* Therefore he adds in verse 3, *Thy loving kindness is better than life.* And all that be truly wise, are of this mind, and will subscribe to his choice. Let them enjoy this loving kindness and prize it, because, whatever befalls them, their happiness and joy is above the reach of all calamities. Let them be derided and reproached abroad, yet still, this inward persuasion makes them glad and contented. As a rich man said, though the people hated and taunted him, yet, when he came home and looked upon his chests, *Egomet mihi plaudo domi;* with how much better reason do believers bear out external injuries! What inward contentment is theirs, when they consider themselves as truly enriched with the favour of God! And as this makes them contemn the contempts that the world puts upon them, so, likewise, it breeds in them a neglect and disdain of those poor trifles that the world admires. The sum of their desires is, (as that of the Cynic's was, the sunshine,) that the rays of the love of God may shine constantly upon

them. The favourable aspect and large proffers of kings and princes, would be unwelcome to them, if they should stand betwixt them and the sight of that Sun. And truly they have reason. What are the highest things the world affords? What are great honours and great estates, but great cares and griefs well dressed and coloured over with a shew of pleasure, that promise contentment, and perform nothing but vexation? That they are not satisfying, is evident; for the obtaining of much of them doth but stretch the appetite, and teach men to desire more. They are not solid, neither. Will not the pains of a gout, of a stranguary, or some such malady, (to say nothing of the worst, the pains of a guilty conscience,) blast all these delights? What relish finds a man in large revenues and stately buildings, in high preferments and honourable titles, when either his body or his mind is in anguish! And besides the emptiness of all these things, you know they want one main point, *continuance*. But the loving kindness of God hath all requisites to make the soul happy. *O satisfy us early with Thy goodness* (or *mercy*,) says Moses, *that we may rejoice and be glad all our days*. Psal. xc. 14. There is *fulness* in that for the vastest desires of the soul—*satisfy us;* there is *solid contentment*—that begets true *joy and gladness;* and there is *permanency—all our days*. It is the only comfort of this life, and the assurance of a better. This were a large subject to insist on, but certainly the naming of *His loving kindness* should beget in each heart a high esteem of it, an ardent desire after it. And if it do so with you, then know, that it is only to be found in the way of holiness. He is a holy God, and can love nothing that is altogether unlike Himself. There must always be some similitude and conformity of nature to ground kindness and friendship upon, and to maintain it. That saying is true, *Idem velle et idem nolle, firma amicitia*. What gross self-flattery is it, to think that God's loving kindness can be towards you, while you are in love with sin, which he so perfectly hates! How can the profane swearer, or voluptuous person, or the oppressor and covetous, or the close hypocrite, (worse than any of them,) rest upon the loving kindness of the Lord in the day of troubles? No, surely. But the terror of His wrath shall be added to all their other calamities; and they shall find it heavier than all the rest. God will not pour this precious oil of gladness, this persuasion of His love, into filthy vessels. Even His own children, when they grieve and sadden His holy Spirit by unholiness, shall be sadly punished by the withdrawing of those comforting and sensible expressions of His love.

Labour, then, you who as yet never tasted of this love, to know what it means. Forsake and hate that which hitherto has made you strangers to it; for if you obtain this, it shall comfort you when those things cannot, but would rather prove your greatest torment. And you who have received any testimonies of it, entertain it carefully, for it is your best comfort both in your best days and in your worst days too.

You would all gladly be delivered from the many evils that threaten you; for many they be indeed, and peace is a great blessing. But suppose you were secured from all those fears, and He should command a sudden calm, (which truly he can do,) would you then think

yourselves happy? That life of yours which you so fear to lose by fire or sword, though you had peace, would ere long fall into the hands of some ague, or fever, or consumption, and perish by them; or at the longest, a few years will end it: it is a lighted candle, which though nobody blow out, will quickly burn out of itself. But this loving kindness is not so short-lived: it shall last as long as your souls, and so long as it lasts, they shall be happy. Those goods that you fear shall be pillaged and spoiled in war, how many hazards are they subject to even in peace! Solomon tells you, that *riches oftentimes*, though nobody should take them away, *make themselves wings, and fly away*. And truly, many times the undue sparing of them, is but the letting of their wings grow, which makes them readier to fly away: and the contributing a part of them to do good, only clips their wings a little, and makes them stay the longer with their owner. But this by the way. Howsoever, *in the day of death, and in the day of wrath*, as Solomon says, *they profit nothing at all*. Prov. xi. 4. So then, though you may desire that God would command deliverance for you, yet, if you would be truly happy, your greater and more earnest suit should be, that He would *command His loving-kindness* to appear to your souls. And having once obtained this, you may possibly be persecuted, and endure hard trials, but one thing is made sure, you cannot be miserable. Nor shall you want temporal mercies and preservation too, so far as they are good for you. The inward assurance of this love shall carry you strangely and sweetly through all outward vicissitudes; and when the day shall come, that all other comforts shall look pale upon you, then shall you find the worth and happiness of this more than ever before. Observe,

2. The manner in which the Psalmist expects to enjoy the object of his confidence: *The Lord will command*, make it appear to me. Sometimes God is said to shut up and hide His love from His children, and that is a mournful time with them. But we read not that He shuts *out* His love, and ceaseth altogether to have affection to those whom once He loved. And therefore, when he shews himself again, in the gracious manifestations of His mercy, He is not said to begin anew to love them, but only to *command His love*, which erewhile He had countermanded to appear.

3. The time: *In the day*. If you have a mind to take the *day* and *night*, figuratively, for prosperous and adverse times, it would lead you, in that sense, to observe David's constancy in God's praises; which was such that not only in the day of deliverance, but even in the night of distress, he resolved a song for God. And truly, many times God gives His children in an afflicted condition, more sweetness of spirit, more aptitude, not only to pray, but to praise, and more spiritual delight in Himself, than in times of outward peace and prosperity. *He giveth songs in the night*, said Job; and you know the sound of music is most delightful in the night. But to take it properly, David is confident that in the several actions and occurrences of *the day* he should find the *goodness and favourable assistance* of the Lord; and then he resolves, (which leads to the other part of the text,) *in the night time to meditate on that goodness, and to frame a song of praise to the Author of it*.

And indeed, what is the whole thread of our life, but a checkered

twist, black and white, of delights and dangers interwoven? and the happiest passing of it, is constantly to enjoy and to observe the experiences of God's goodness, and to praise Him for them. David was a wise king, and withal a valiant soldier, and yet we see he thought not this experience inconsonant with either of those two conditions. This precious book of Psalms (a great part thereof being his) testifies clearly, that prayer and praises were his great employment. A religious disposition of mind may not only consist with fortitude and magnanimity, but is indeed the best principle and cause of both, contrary to the wicked and foolish opinion of profane persons. Whether of the two, do you think, might welcome a day of battle with most courage and resolution; he that had passed the preceding night in revelling and carousing, or he that had spent it in prayer and obtained some assurance of a better life? Truly, if they went on with equal forwardness, there is no man, except he were an atheist, but would judge the one to be brutish fury and precipitation, and the other true valour.

His song. In the worst estate there is ever some matter of praise to be mixed with request; and truly, we may justly suspect that our neglect of praises makes our prayers unacceptable.

And my prayer. In the best estate here below, praise must be accompanied with prayer. Our wants, and necessities, and straits, return daily upon us, and require new supplies of mercy; and prayer, if we know how to use it right, is the way to obtain them all.

To the God of my life, or, *the God that is my life.* This word is added, as the reason of all that went before. If you ask David, why he reposeth so much upon the loving-kindness of God, what he means, to spend so much pains in praises and prayer to God; he answers, *Because he is my life.* He is the author and preserver of my temporal life, and all the passages and accidents of it are in His hand alone. He hath also given me, and He maintains in me a spiritual life; yea, He is the life of my soul: it lives by union with Him, as my body does by union with it, and He hath laid up life eternal for me. Would Christians think thus indeed, the light of this consideration would dispel their distrustful fears. Certainly, there is atheism at the bottom of them; if not a denial or a misconceit of God, at least a forgetfulness of God. See Isa. li. 12, 13. *I, even I, am He that comforteth you. Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?* Consider, then, that men have no power over our present life, but by the appointment of God. And beside that, we have another life which is infinitely more precious than this: a life spiritual, and which is the beginning of eternal life; and this is altogether out of danger from them. *Our life is hid with Christ in God.* Col. iii. 3. It is *hid*, and wicked men cannot so much as see it: how then should they take it from us, seeing it is *hid?* And that not meanly: it is *hid with Christ in God.* What then shall become of it? Read the next verse, and read it to your comfort, for there is abundance in it, if you look right upon it. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we likewise shall appear with him in glory.* They that are in God, being united to Him through Christ,

can never by any power be separated from Him. It is an indissoluble union. Death itself, that is the great dissolver of all other unions, civil and natural, is so far from untying this, that it consummates it: it conveys the soul into the nearest and fullest enjoyment of God, who is its life, where it shall not need to desire that God would *command* (or *send*) *His loving-kindness*, as it were from a distance; it shall be then at the spring-head, and shall be satisfied with His love for ever.

SERMON VII.

PREFACE.

WHEREFORE *do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfies not?* says the Prophet. Isa. lv. 2. All men agree in this, that they would willingly meet with some satisfying good; and yet, if you look aright upon the projects and labours of the greatest part, you shall find them flying from it, and taking much pains to be miserable. And truly, considering the darkness that is upon the soul of man, it is no great wonder to see those miss their way, and continue wandering, who hear not the voice of the Gospel to recall them, and see not its light to direct them. But this is some what strange, that where true happiness, and the true way to it are propounded and set before men, so few should follow it in good earnest. If the excellency of that good did not allure them, yet, one would think that their many disappointments in all other things, should drive them home to it. How often do we run ourselves out of breath after shadows! And when we think we have overtaken them, and would lay hold of them, we find nothing. And yet, still we love to befool ourselves, even against our own experience, which, we say, uses to make fools wiser. Still we choose rather to shift from one vanity to another, than to return to that Sovereign Good, that alone can fill the vastest desires of our souls; rather to run from one *broken cistern* to another, as the Prophet calls them, yea, and to take pains to *hew them out*, than have recourse to that *Fountain of living waters*. One main thing that makes men thus rove and wander is, that they do not reflect upon their own course, nor upon themselves, what is the main end they aim at, and then see whether their way be suitable to that end. If they would be happy, (as who would not?) then surely, things that are empty, and uncertain, and certainly perishing, will not serve the turn. And truly, as the thought would be seasonable at any time, so especially to us in these times, wherein, besides the common uncertainty of outward things, there is an apparent visible hazard that men's lives and fortunes are likely to be put to. Will you make advantage and gain of your trouble? Thus. The looser you find other things tied to you, and as it were upon a running knot, secure that one thing, and your portion in it, which is worth all the rest; yea, far above them all, and that alone which can be secured, and made certain. Wanting this, what though you had peace, and health, and all imaginable prosperity, you would still be miserable,

being liable to the wrath of God, and eternal destruction. But if once united to Christ, and in him reconciled to God, and entitled to Heaven, what can fall amiss to you? You shall have joy in the midst of sorrow and affliction, and peace in the midst of war, yea, and life in death. But think not to attain this assurance, while you continue profane and God-less, not seeking it in the way of holiness, for there alone it is to be found. And withal beg it of God by humble prayer.

Psalm cxix. 136.

Rivers of waters run down mine eyes: because they keep not Thy law.

Love is the leading passion of the soul: all the rest follow the measure and motion of it, as the lower heavens are said to be wheeled about with the first.

We have here a clear instance of it in the Psalmist, who is testifying his love to God, by his esteem and love of the law or word of God. What is each of the several verses of this Psalm, but a several breathing and vent of this love, either in itself, or in the causes, or in the effects of it? Where he sets forth the excellencies and utilities of God's law, there you have the *causes* of his love. His observing and studying of it, his desire to know it more and observe it better, these are the *effects* of his affection to it. The love itself, he often expresseth, ver. 47, 48, 113, and 140. *Thy word is pure; therefore Thy servant loveth it.* And ver. 127: *I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.* But as scarcely accounting that love which can be uttered, how much it is, ver. 97, he expresseth it most by intimating that he cannot express it: *O, how I love Thy law!* Hence are his desires (which are love in pursuit) so earnest after it. Amongst many, that is pathetical, ver. 20: *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgment at all times.* Hence, likewise, his joy and delight, (which are love in possession,) ver. 14; *I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies as much as in all riches;* and ver. 16, *I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy word.* We have his hatred of things opposite, (which is love's antipathy,) ver. 113, *I hate vain thoughts, but Thy law do I love;* ver. 163, *I hate and abhor lying, but Thy law do I love.* And in the 139th verse you shall find his zeal, (which is no other than the fire of love stirred up or blown into a flame,) *My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.* And (to omit the rest) in the 158th verse, his love to the law, shows its sympathy in sorrow for the violation of the law: *I beheld the transgressors and was grieved; because they kept not Thy word.* And here you find this grief swelling to such a height, that it runs over into abundant tears. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes; because they keep not Thy law.*

The words have briefly, these *rivers* in their *channel* and *course*, *They run down mine eyes;* and then, in their *spring and cause*, to wit, the Psalmist's sympathy with God's law broken by men, in the latter clause of the verse, *because they keep not Thy law.* But both together clearly teach us, *That godly men are affected with deep sorrow for the sins of the ungodly.*

More particularly consider, I. The object of this affection. II. The nature of it. III. The degree or measure of it. IV. Its subject.

I. The *object* is, the Transgression of the Law, or, to take it (as in the text) *in concreto*, Men transgressors of the law: *They keep not Thy law.* It is true, *the whole creation groaneth* under the burden of sin, in the effects of it, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 32; but sin itself is man's enemy, he being that reasonable creature to whom the law was given. Now in the general, it is a matter of grief to a godly mind to consider the universal depravedness of man's nature; that he is a *transgressor from the womb;* that *the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to His law, neither,* while it remains such, *can it be.* Rom. viii. 6. And this grief will go the deeper, by remembering from whence he is fallen. When he was new come forth of the hands of his Maker, that image of God which He stamped upon Him, shined bright in his soul: the whole frame of it was regular and comely, the inferior faculties obeying the higher, and all of them subject unto God. But how soon was he seduced, and then what a great change ensued! *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* There is ever since, such a tumult and confusion in the soul, that it cannot hear the voice of God's law, much less obey and keep it. Hence is that complaint of the Psalmist oftener than once, *They are all gone out of the way, and become abominable; there is none that doth good, no, not one. Mundus immundus,* ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κεῖται, *lies buried in it,* as the word is used in the inscription of tombs, ἐνθάδε κεῖται. Look abroad in the world, and what shall ye see but a sea of wickedness over the face of the whole, which draws from a godly, discerning eye that beholds it, these *rivers of tears?* The greatest part not knowing the true God, nor the true religion and the true way of His worship. And for those that do, yet, how unlike are they to it in their lives! The reformed churches this way, how unreformed are they in a great part!

But more particularly to branch this out a little in respect to several sorts of men, this godly grief is a very large sphere; it will extend to remote people, remote every way, not only in place, but in manners and religion, even to heathens and gross idolators. Yea, the very sins of enemies, and of such as are professed enemies to God, yet move the tender-hearted Christian to sorrow and compassion. *Of whom I now tell you weeping,* says St. Paul, *that they are enemies to the cross of Christ.* Phil. iii. 8. *Enemies,* and yet he speaks of them *weeping.* What he writes concerning them, he would have written in tears, if that had been legible. Thus you see the *extension* of this grief. But yet, out of all question, it will be more *intense* in particulars of nearer concernment. It is the burden of the pious man's heart, that His law who made the world and gives being to all things, should be so little regarded, and so much broken through all the world; but yet more especially, that in His own Church, amongst His own people, transgression should abound. Sins within the Church are most properly scandals. God manifests Himself (so to speak) most sensible of those, and therefore the godly man is so too. Whether they be the continual enormities of licentious and profane persons, which are by external profession in the face of the visible Church; (though indeed they be in it but as *spots* and *blemishes,* as the Apostle speaks; 2 Pet. ii. 13,) or whether it

be the apostacy of hypocrites; or (which sometimes falls out) the gross falls of true converts; all these are the great grief of the godly. The relations of men, either natural or civil, will add something too; this sorrow will in such cases be greater than ordinary in a Christian: he will melt it in a particular tenderness for the sins of his kindred, parents or children, husband, or wife; and most of all, ministers will grieve for the sins of their people. How pathetically does this appear in St. Paul! *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed*, 2 Cor. xii. 21. A man cannot but be more particularly touched with the sins of that nation, and of that city, and congregation, and family, whereof he is a member. So we read of Lot, 2 Pet. ii. 8: *For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.* The sins of more eminent persons, either in Church or Commonwealth, will most affect a prudent Christian, because their inclinations and actions import the public much. Therefore the Apostle, when he had exhorted to *supplications and prayers for all men*, particularly mentions *kings*, and *such as are in authority*. 1 Tim. i. 2. And truly, when they are abused by misadvice and corrupt counsel, some of these tears were very well spent, if poured forth before God in their behalf: for *in His hand*, as that wise king confesseth, *are their hearts*, there compared to *rivers of waters;* let their motion be never so impetuous, yet, *He turneth them whithersoever He pleaseth.* Prov. xxi. 1. And who knows but *these* rivers of waters, these tears, may prevail with the Lord to reduce the violent current of that river, a king's heart, from the wrong channel?

II. But to proceed: the second thing to be considered in this affection, is, the *nature* of it. (1.) It is not a stoical apathy, and affected carelessness; much less a delightful partaking with sinful practices. (2.) Not a proud setting off of their own goodness, with marking the sin of others, as the Pharisee did in the gospel. (3.) Not the derision and mocking of the folly of men, with that *laughing philosopher:* it comes nearer to the temper of the *other* who *wept* always for it. It is not a bitter, bilious anger, breaking forth into railings and reproaches, nor an upbraiding insultation. Nor is it a vindictive desire of punishment, venting itself in cursings and imprecations, which is the rash temper of many, but especially of the vulgar sort. The disciples' motion to Christ was far different from that way, and yet he says to them, *You know not of what spirit ye are.* They thought they had been of Elijah's spirit, but he told them they were mistaken, and did not know of what spirit they were in that motion. Thus, heady zeal often mistakes and flatters itself. We find not here a desire of fire to come down from Heaven upon the breakers of the law, but such a grief as would rather bring water to quench it, if it were falling on them. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes.*

III. The *degree* of this sorrow: it is vehement, not a light, transient dislike, but a deep resentment, such as causeth not some few sighs, or some drops of tears, but *rivers—Palge maijim. Pelagus aquarum.* It is true, the *measure and degree* of sorrow for sin, whether their own

or others, are different in divers persons, who are yet true mourners; and they are also different in the same person, at divers times, not only upon the difference of the cause, but even where the cause is equal, upon the different influence and working of the Spirit of God. Sometimes it pleaseth Him to warm and melt the heart more abundantly, and so He raises these *rivers*, in those eyes, to a higher tide than ordinary; sometimes they remove again. But yet, this godly sorrow is always serious and sincere; and that is the other quality here remarkable in it. It is not a histrionical weeping, only in public; for the speech is here directed to God, as a more frequent witness of these tears than any other; who is always the witness of the sincerity of them, even when they cannot be hid *from the eyes of men*. For I deny not but they may, and should, have vent in public, especially at such times as are set apart for solemn mourning and humiliation. Yet, even then, usually these streams run deepest, where they are stillest and most quietly conveyed. But surely they should not be fewer and less frequent, alone, than in company, for that is a little subject to suspicion. See Jer. ix. 1: *Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* And, xiii. 17: *But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.*

IV. The *subject* of this affection is, not the ungodly themselves, who are professed transgressors of this law; they rather make *a sport of sin*, as Solomon speaks; they play and make themselves merry with it, as the Philistines did with Samson, till it brings the house down about their ears; but the godly are they that are affected with this sorrow, such as are careful observers of the law themselves, and mourn first for their own breaches: for these are the only fit mourners for the transgression of others.

Now to inquire a little into the *cause* of this, why the breaking of God's law should cause such sorrow in the godly, as here breaketh forth into abundance of tears. We shall find it very reasonable if we consider, 1. The nature of Sin, which is the *transgression*, or breach, *of the law*, as the Apostle defines it. 2. The nature of this sorrow and these tears. 3. The nature of the godly.

1. Sin is the greatest evil in the world; yea, truly, in comparison, it alone is worth the name of *evil*, and therefore may justly challenge sorrow, and the greatest sorrow. The greatest of evils it is, both *formally*, in that it alone is the defilement and deformity of the soul, and *causally*, being the root from whence all other evils spring; the fruitful womb that conceives and brings forth all those miseries that either man feels, or hath cause to fear. Whence are all those personal evils incident to men in their estates, or in their bodies, or minds, outward turmoils and diseases, and inward discontents, and death itself, in all the kinds of it; are they not all the fruits of that bitter root? Whence arise those public miseries of nations and kingdoms, but from the epidemic national sins of the people, as the deserving and procuring cause at God's hand, and withal, oftentimes from the ambitious and wicked practices of some particular men, as the working and

effecting causes? So that every way, if we follow these evils home to their original, we shall find it to be sin, or the breaking of God's law. Ungodly men, though they meddle not with public affairs at all, yea, though they be faithful and honest in meddling with them, yet, by reason of their impious lives, are traitors to their nation: they are truly the incendiaries of states and kingdoms. And these mourners, though they can do no more, are the most loyal and most serviceable subjects, bringing tears to quench the fire of wrath, *rivers of waters*. And therefore sorrow and tears are not only most due to sin, as the greatest of evils, but they are best bestowed upon it, if they can do any thing to its redress, because that is both the surest and most compendious way to remedy all the rest, sin being the source and spring of them all.

This is the reason why Jeremiah, ch. ix. ver. 1, when he would weep for the *slain* of his people, is straightway led from that to bewail the *sin* of his people, ver. 2, 3. And in his Book of *tears* and *lamentations*, he often reduces all these sad evils, to sin as causing them, particularly ch. v. ver. 16: *The crown is fallen from our head. Wo unto us, that we have sinned!* He turns the complaint more to the sin than to the affliction.

2. Consider the nature of these tears. Tears spent for worldly crosses, are all lost; they run all to waste; they are *lachrymæ inanes*, empty, fruitless things. But tears shed for the breach of God's law, are the means to quench God's wrath. The prayers and tears of some few, may avert the punishment of many, yea, of a whole land. And if not so, yet are they not lost; the mourners themselves have always benefit by them: as you have it in that known place, Ezek. ix. 4, they that mourned for the common abominations were *marked*, and the common desolation took not hold on them. This mourning for other men's wickedness, both testifies and preserves the godly man's innocence. I say, it preserves it, as well as testifies it: it keeps him from the contagion of that bad air he lives in; for without this, sin would soon grow familiar. It is good for men to keep up and maintain in their souls a dislike of sin; for when once it ceaseth to be displeasing to a man, it will, before long, begin to be pleasing to him.

3. If we consider the nature of the godly, we shall see this mourning suit with it exceedingly, both in regard of his relation to God, and to man. God is his Father, and therefore it cannot but grieve him much, to see Him offended and dishonoured. Love to God, and consequently to His law, and love to men, and desire of their good, are the spring of these *rivers*. A godly man is tender of God's glory and of His law; every stroke that it receives, striketh his heart: and he hath bowels of compassion to men, and would be glad if they were converted and saved. He considers every man as his brother, and therefore is sorrowful to see him run the hazard of perishing in sin. The former sympathy, whereby the godly man tenders the glory of God, is from his piety: this latter, whereby he pities the misery of man, is from his charity. And from these flow the *rivers that run down his eyes*.

To be too sensible of worldly crosses, and prodigal of tears upon such slight occasions, is little better than childish or womanish; but these tears that flow from love to God and grief for sin, have neither uncomeliness nor excess in them. Abundance of them will beseem

any man who is a Christian. Let profane men judge it a weakness to weep for sin, yet, we see David do it. Men of arms and valour need not fear disparagement by weeping thus: it is the truest magnanimity, to be sensible of the point of God's honour, which is injured by sin.

Again, the consideration of this truth will discover the world guilty of very much ingratitude to godly men. It hath always been the custom of profane persons, to seek to brand religion and godliness with disloyalty and turbulency, and to make it pass for an enemy to the peace and prosperity of states and kingdoms. You see clearly with what affection religion furnishes men towards the public, causing them to mourn for common sins, and so to prevent, as far as in them lies, common calamities. And this is of no little consequence; for truly, it is not foreign power, so much as sin at home, that ruins kingdoms. All the winds that blow without the earth, be they never so violent, stir it not; only that which is within its own bowels, makes an earthquake. It was a grave answer of Epaminondas, being asked what he was doing solitary and pensive in the time of solemn mirth and feasting: *While my countrymen*, said he, *are so peaceably feasting, I am thinking on the best means to preserve that peace to them, that it may continue.* Which, a little altered, is applicable to the godly. They are oftentimes mourning for the sins, and praying for the peace, of the places where they live; when, in the mean time, the greatest part are multiplying sin, and so forfeiting their peace.

Rivers of waters. "This is a mournful, melancholy life that these Precisians lead," says the worldling. Yes, truly, if there were no more in it than what he can perceive and judge of. But besides the full joy laid up for them, and the beginnings of it here, there is even in this mourning an unknown sweetness and delight. The philosopher says even of common tears, that there is some kind of pleasure in them, as some things please the taste by their very tartness. But of these tears, they that know them, know it to be eminently true, that they are pleasant. But be this exercise as sad as the profane call it, yet, why observe they not, that they themselves are much the cause of it? As they may read here: *Because they keep not God's law.*

But to pass by divers inferences that the words afford, let us take notice of the duty here practised, and how much we are all obliged to the present practice of it. Who will deny that we have too much matter and occasions of it? Besides the sorrow of Sion, and particularly the bloodshedding and distress of our brethren, and our own danger, what corner of the land, what rank or condition of people is there, that abounds not in gross and heinous violations of God's law? *They keep not Thy law:* magistrates and judges turning judgment into gall and wormwood; ministers remiss in that great care, the care of souls; people wallowing in ungodliness and uncleanness, swearing, and other profaneness; the greater oppressing the less, and the less defrauding and wronging the greater; no sensible and notable work of conversion almost to be seen or heard of amongst us; the Lord absenting himself from His ordinances. O that He would dwell in His house, and fill it with a cloud of His glory!

What vile uncleanness and wantonness! What shameful drunkenness and excess! And some are so far from mourning for others'

guiltiness of this sin, that they glory, in making others guilty of it, and count it a pastime to make others drunk. And this is a far greater sin than drunkenness itself; for these men, while they make beasts of their companions, make devils of themselves, becoming tempters and provokers to sin. If any such be here, either tremble at the *wo* that the prophet Habakkuk (chap. ii.) denounceth, or confess that you believe not the scriptures: *Wo to him that gives his neighbour drink, and puts the bottle to him to make him drunken. The cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned to thee:* it is full of heavy vengeance. There is a cup, if you like it, to pay you home the cups you give to others.

Again. How is the land filled with oaths and cursings! How are your streets, and almost all companies where a man can come, defiled, partly with tearing the precious name of God, partly with calling on the devil!

There would be no end of reckoning up all particulars; sabbath-breaking, fraud and covetousness, pride and malice, and envyings one of another, and the rest. But the sum is this, a universal want of the fear of God and His law.

And the cause of this, is, in a great part, ignorance of God and of His law. And truly it is wonderful, under so much light and such plentiful preaching, to find so much darkness, not only in the skirts and remote places, but even in the prime parts of this land. Multitudes there are that are strangers to the very principles and fundamentals of that religion which they profess; and they that have knowledge, are found abusing it, and sinning against it, continuing in profaneness. And without this true religion, it is as impossible to have renewed hearts and lives, as to have a house without a foundation, or, as we say, a castle in the air. And this atheism and ignorance amongst people, is in a great part to be imputed to the corruption and sloth of ministers. Would to God there were not many congregations, not altogether destitute, but such as are freezing under a cold and lifeless ministry!

You see, then, we want not causes of mourning and humiliation, on all hands; but our want is inward, of that due disposition for it, *softness of heart*, and that *love to God* which should melt and mollify the heart. Let us then stir up ourselves and one another, to this godly sorrow for the sins of the land. There is need of *rivers of tears* for these heaps of sin: as they tell of Hercules' letting in a river to that monstrous stable of Augeus, that could not otherwise have been cleansed in the time allotted him.

And truly, as the duty lies upon all the faithful, the ministers of the word ought to be most eminent in it, the chief mourners, the precentors, to take up the tune of these themes. Joel ii. 17. And all that wish the good of church and kingdom, ought to bear a part in them, according to their measure. Have we not much need to entreat reconcilement with God, that He prove not our enemy? Yes, surely, and were we reconciled with Him, we should have little need to fear the power of man.

Now, they that would be profitable mourners for others' sins, by all means, must have these two conditions I mentioned; to be careful observers of the law themselves, and to mourn for their own failing

and breaking of it. Now, to the observing of the law, it is absolutely needful, (1.) To know and understand it, and that not only in the letter and surface, but according to the spiritual sense and meaning of it. For without this knowledge, a man may light upon some duty by guess, as it were in the dark, but observe the law he cannot. They are not alone reproveable, who glory in their own sins, and make sport of the sins of others, but they mistake it much, who think it enough to consider their own with grief, and judge the sins of others an impertinency for them to think on. As they mourn not aright for others, who begin not at themselves, so, they mourn never aright for themselves, who end in themselves. He who here thus weeps for others, made his bed to swim with those rivers for his own sin. Psal. vi. 6. (2.) As a man must know this law, so he must be inwardly convinced and persuaded of the divinity of it, that it is God's law. (3.) He must have a deep apprehension of the majesty and authority of the Lawgiver, to work reverence, and of His goodness, to beget love; and the due mixture of these two, will both strongly command and sweeten obedience to His commandments. And this obedience, though it be not an absolute and perfect fulfilling of any one of the commandments, yet, it has a respect to them all, as this Psalm hath it, (ver. 6.) which is (so to speak) an imperfect kind of perfection. And from this respect to the law, which is the observing of it, will flow that other condition, of grieving when we break it.

And besides all other things that should make a Christian's own sin grevious to him, there is one thing cannot but move him much, the consideration of the sorrow and sufferings of Christ. To view the bleedings of the Lord Jesus, cannot but pierce a believing soul, and make it say, Did my Redeemer shed his blood for my sins, and shall not I myself shed tears for them? I know, the natural constitution of some, denies them tears; but if it do so to any, make up that want with a sense of inward grief, and it is well enough. The eye of God can discern that as well as the other. But truly, where men have tears for lighter causes, (for all other causes are lighter,) and none for this, they feel not yet the weight of sin; except that want be through the deepness of sorrow, which sometimes will stop the current of tears, though it used to run at other times: as they say, *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.* But this is a rare and a happy impediment.

And to answer another doubt: If you find sometimes worldly griefs stir you more violently, yet, let this godly sorrow affect you more constantly, that it may have the advantage in continuance, if it fall short in the degree.

But as this grief must begin at home, as they say of charity, it must not be so selfish as to rest there. And truly, where it comes in that order, it may be some way a stronger evidence of sincerity, to mourn for others' sins, than to mourn for our own; for there seems to be more of God in it, because there is less in it of ourselves, and of our own particular interest.

Now you will possibly think it but an unpleasant duty that you have heard urged all this while; but look forward, and consider the issue of it. That which Christ speaks in particular to his disciples, is generally true of all Christians: *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world*

shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned (or made) *into joy.* John xvi. 20. The water of those tears shall be turned into wine of consolation. The traffic of these *rivers* is gainful; they export grief, and import joy. When these tears are called *seed*, the harvest-crop is called *joy.* Psal. cxxvi. 5. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.* They are here called *rivers*, and they are answered with a river, for which they shall in the end be perfectly exchanged. Psal. lxxxvi. 8; *Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures.* And Rev. vii. 17: *The Lamb shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters.* Here they run down the eyes, and water the cheeks, and there you read that God shall wipe them away from their eyes. Who would not be content to weep, to have God wipe away their tears with His own hand? Be ambitious, then, to be found amongst the mourners in Sion; and when ye remove from this valley of tears, God shall at once fully wipe away all the stain of sin from your souls, and all tears for it from your eyes. And as He shall wipe away the tears with the one hand, He will set the crown upon your heads with the other.

SERMON VIII.

[Preached after the Administration of the Lord's Supper.]

PREFACE.

Blessed *are They that dwell in Thy House*, saith the Psalmist; and he adds this reason, *They will be still praising Thee.* There is indeed always in God's house, both fit opportunity and plentiful matter of His praises. But the greater number of those who frequent His house, do not *dwell* in it; their delight and affection is not there. Therefore they cannot praise Him: they come in as strangers, and have no skill in the songs of praise. Yea, and the very children of the family, who worship in spirit and in truth, find their instruments (their hearts) very often quite out of tune for praises, and sometimes most of all when praises are requisite. They find still such abundant cause of complaint in themselves, weighing down their spirits, that they can hardly at all wind them up to magnify that God whose mercy is far more abundant. If we would take a reflex view, and look back upon our carriage this day in the presence of our God, who is there among us, who would not find much work for sad thoughts? Would not one find that he had a hard and stony heart, another, a light, inconstant, wandering heart to complain of, a third, an unbelieving heart, and some all of these? And they (if such there be) who have both deeply sorrowed and been largely comforted, will possibly, for all that upon former sad experience, be full of fears and jealousies, that this sweet temper will not be of long continuance; that before long, the world or some lust, will find, or make a way to creep in, and banish those heavenly thoughts, and trouble that peace and joy which accompanies them. Yet, notwithstanding all these causes of grief or fear, our causes of praise are

both more and greater. And it is no reason that the sense of our own evil should prejudge that acknowledgment of God's goodness; yea, rather it should stir us up to extol it so much the more. Cease not to bemoan the evils of your own hearts; but withal forget not to magnify the riches of His grace, who hath given Himself for you, and to you. These two will not hinder one another, but the due intermixture of them will make a very good harmony. And the fruit of them will be this, you shall have still more cause to praise, and less to complain. When the Lord shall find you humble acknowledgers of His grace, He will delight to bestow more grace upon you, and will subdue those iniquities for you, which you cannot. And though He is pleased to do it but gradually, by little and little, yet, in the end, the conquest shall be full; and then, He who is the *author and the finisher of your faith*, though it is His own work, yet, because it is done in you, He shall account the victory yours, as obtained by you, and give you as conquerors, the crown of glory. *To him that overcometh*, saith he, *will I give to sit with me in my throne.* Rev. iii. 21.

There is nothing here, but from free grace. The courage and strength to fight in this spiritual warfare, the victory by fighting, and the crown by victory, flow all from that fountain. *In all these things, we are more than conquerors*, saith the Apostle—but how?—*through Him that loved us.* Therefore, if we desire to be such, let us humble ourselves before the throne of grace, entreating both for grace and glory in the name of Christ our Mediator.

Cant. i. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

The natural workings and desires of things are agreeable to their being. The beasts, according to their sensitive life, seek those things that tend to the good and preservation of that life, and affect nothing higher than those, and they are satisfied. Man (except such men as are in the lowest stage, and border upon the beasts) finds nature, even corrupt nature, raising him to higher desires and designs. And yet, of the best of them, the Apostle's maxim holds true. *They that are after the flesh, mind the things of the flesh;* and yet, he subjoins the excellency of some men beyond the best naturalist, *They that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 5. They cannot be confined to things natural, but are strongly moved towards spiritual blessings, and towards Christ the sum of them. And having once tasted of his sweetness, they can say, *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth.*

They that are elevated to a supernatural being, can admit nothing into competition with His love; and this it is that lies under these words, *Because of the savour of thy good ointments*, &c.

Numbers have promiscuously been his guests at this time, and the greatest number think they came to good purpose. But know, that you are so far from partaking of Christ in the sacrament, that you have not so much as smelt his perfumes, if you be not strongly taken with his love. Great are the praises, and many the duties you owe Him for

so rich favours; and therefore, show your good will, and endeavour some payment. But know, that none of them are current, except they be stamped with *love*. If you love not, you do nothing: all your labours and services without it, are as so many ciphers, they amount to just nothing. And with it, the meanest of them will find acceptance.

You have briefly in the words, *Christ's loveliness* and *the Christian's love*, the former the cause of the latter; both couched under borrowed terms, according to the whole strain of this allegorical song, on which the true experimental knowledge of this Divine love is the best commentary.

In all love, three things are necessary: (1.) Some goodness in the object, either true and real, or apparent and seeming to be so; for the soul, be it never so evil, can affect nothing but what it takes some way to be good. (2.) There must be a knowledge of that goodness; for the most excellent things, if altogether unknown, affect not. (3.) There must be a suitableness or agreement of that good thing with the nature of those who should affect it; otherwise, indeed, how good soever it is, it is not good to them.

Now all these we have clearly in this love. I. The goodness, the excellency of Christ, expressed by *precious ointments*. II. The manifestation and making of it known, signified by *the pouring forth of His name*. III. His fitness and congruity with them who are here mentioned under this denomination, *virgins;* such as have the senses of their souls not stopped with the pollutions of the world, but pure and active, and therefore, as the Apostle speaks, Heb. v. 14, *exercised to discern good and evil*. These three requisites thus happily met, must needs produce love: *Therefore the virgins love thee*.

I. The excellency of the Object: *Because of the savour of thy good ointments*. How true is the Apostle's word, when he calls Christ the believer's *All things!* And that radical grace of faith, because it apprehends Christ, hath a kind of universality; and it is reasonable too, it alone being to the soul what all the five senses are to the body. It is the eye, and the mouth; a wonderful eye, it *sees Him who is invisible*, Heb. xi. 27; the mouth, it *tastes that the Lord is gracious*, 1 Pet. ii. 3. Yea, take these two both together in one place, Psal. xxxiv. 8, *O! taste, and see that the Lord is good*. It is the soul's ear; for what else is meant, when it is said, *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear?* And was it not that *touch* which Christ took special notice of, and with good reason distinguished it from the common touch of the multitude that was crowding about him? That *touch* alone draws virtue from him? *Some one hath touched me, for there is virtue gone out of me*. And lastly, as it is all those other senses, and Christ is its object in reference to them all, so here, in its *smelling*, it finds the savour of his fragrant graces, and by that works love: *Because of the savour of thy precious ointments*.

What strange odds is there betwixt the opinion of Christ's Spouse, and that of the world who know him not! They wonder what she sees in him desirable: she wonders that they are not all ravished with his excellencies. They prefer the basest vanities in the world before him: she finds the choicest and richest things in the world too mean to resemble the smallest part of his worth. See in this *Song*,

how busily and skilfully she goes to all the creatures, and crops the rarest pieces in nature and art to set forth her well-beloved, and seems to find them all too poor for her purpose. One while, she extols him above all things beautiful and pleasant to the eye; another while, above things delectable to the taste, as in the former verse, *Thy loves are better than wine;* and here she prefers the perfume of his graces to the most precious ointments.

When a natural eye looks upon the sacrament, to wit, of the Lord's Supper, it finds it a bare and mean kind of ceremony. Take heed there be not many of you that come to it, and partake of it with others, who prize it little, have but low conceits of it, and do indeed find as little in it as you look for. But Oh, what precious consolation and grace doth a believer meet with at this banquet! How richly is the table furnished to his eye! What plentiful varieties employ his hand and taste, what abundance of rare dainties! Yet, there is nothing but One here; but that One is all things to the believing soul. It finds *his* love is sweeter than the richest wine to the taste, or best odours to the smell; and that delightful word of his, *Thy sins are forgiven thee,* is the only music to a distressed conscience.

Thy good ointments. The holy ointment of the sanctuary, under the Law, was composed according to God's own prescription. See Exod. xxx. 25. And they were straightly forbid to imitate it, or make any like it, to signify the singular holiness, the matchless worth of the anointing *oil of gladness,* wherewith our high priest, the Lord Jesus, was *anointed above his fellows.* And in this he is incomparable, that his ointment he hath not from without. It was his own Divine nature that perfumed his manhood with these precious ointments. God and the Spirit of the Lord, are said to have anointed him. Psal. xlv. 7: *Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* And Isa. lxi. 1: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.* But know, that that Spirit and the Father, are one in essence with the eternal Son. In that mystical song much like to this, the xlvth Psalm, it is said, (ver. 8) his *garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia,* [as he comes forth] *out of* [his] *ivory palaces.* When he came down from his glorious court above, to dwell among men, he apparelled himself like them: he was clothed with human flesh. But yet, that vesture was so transcendently enriched with all graces, as with costly perfumes, that men might easily know there was more under them than a mere man. Yea, even in that low estate, did such beams of his glory shine through, that all whose eyes were open, did clearly behold them, and know him to be no less than the only begotten Son of God, by this, that he was so *full of grace and truth.* John i. 14. And these are, in a word, the precious ointments whose delightful smell is here commended.

Now, to enumerate and describe these graces, what tongue of men, yea, or of angels, were sufficient? What other is the main subject of the whole Scriptures? What mean all the figures and ceremonies of the Law, the costly furniture and ornaments of the Temple, the rich vestments of the High Priest, that fine linen, that silk and gold, those

gems and precious stones? Was any one of them, were they all, any other than shadows and dim resemblances of the matchless perfections of Jesus Christ? It is strange, that Christians have so low conceits of their high Redeemer! What is the Gospel, but a more clear and plentiful pouring forth of those ointments? What was the great labour and business of the holy Apostles, but the diffusing of Christ's graces through the world? *I determined to know nothing among you, save Christ, and him crucified*, says St. Paul to his Corinthians. What are that other sacrament and this, but coverts under which Christ conveys himself and his graces to the believing soul, while the profane and slight-hearted receivers are sent away with empty elements? Thus you see how ample a subject these graces are in the general. And truly, the consideration of any one particular of them, might be the employment of many hours. Would you hear of the *wisdom of* Christ? Look what the Apostle says of it, Col. ii. 3: *In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Not some drops of wisdom, no, nor streams, but a fountain. Not one treasure, but treasures, many treasures, yea, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; yet, not obvious to every eye, but, as treasures are, *hid.* The children of wisdom, who are the world's fools, have some knowledge of this his wisdom, and draw from it for their own use; but to sound the depth of it, who can be able!

No less admirable is his *holiness.* He is both the immaculate Lamb, and the undefiled Sacrifice. *Such a high priest became us.* Heb. vii. 26. Became *us!* Yes, *holy, harmless and undefiled:* the more we were defiled with sin, the more stood we in need of an undefiled and spotless High Priest. It was as expedient that he should be unlike us in that, as that he should be like us in all other things. Therefore, as for the Legal priesthood there was a holy consecrating oil, so this immortal High Priest was anointed with most entire and complete holiness. And this perfect holiness of his, is set forth as *myrrh*, the best ointments and spices—*myrrh* which is of a virtue preservative from corruption. He was not only of excellent smell, while he lived among men, but this myrrh did likewise preserve and exempt him from contracting any corruption or pollution, by the bad air of sinful company; so that he conversed with sinners, that he might convert them, without any danger of infection.

And as he was thus extraordinarily anointed with the spirit of wisdom and holiness, so likewise with the spirit of *meekness;* therefore He is called *The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.* His *voice was not heard in the streets.* Matt. xii. 19. And take in that other grace which he himself mentions together with his meekness, as being near in nature to it, *humility: Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Matt. xi. 29. Indeed, humility is an odoriferous grace: it is a *gracing* grace, it adds a kind of sweetness and lustre to all other graces; yea, it serves singularly as a character for the trial of the truth of all other graces. As balsam, which is the chief of precious ointments, used to be tried; that is the truest and best, which, put into any liquor, goes to the bottom; that but slight, which swims above; so those graces are most upright, that are accompanied with most humility. And that this may be out of doubt, you know that Jesus

Christ, (of whom we now speak,) as he had most grace, so was he most exemplary in humility. And certainly, the sweet smell of this *good ointment* did *fill the whole house*, when he washed his disciples' feet; as is said of the ointment that Mary poured upon his feet, in the foregoing chapter. John xii. 3.

Amongst many other of his gracious qualities that might be mentioned, there is one we cannot but take particular notice of, his *love;* the rather, because the fragrant smell of his graces is here said to beget love. Now you know that one of the strongest attractives of *love*, is *love*. Ἔρως ἔρωτα τίκτει: *Magnes amoris amor*. What made him empty himself of his glory, as the Apostle speaks, but because he was full of love? What made him take on the form of a servant, suffer heat, and cold, and hunger, and poverty, but love? What other was it made him digest the persecutions, revilings, and the contradiction of sinners, but love? But the great wonder of his love is this, he *died* to become our life. *Who hath loved me, and given himself for me*, says the great Apostle St. Paul. Gal. ii. 20. And *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us*, says the beloved Apostle St. John. 1 John iii. 16. Was it the nails that held him fast to the cross, when they tauntingly bade him come down? No; it was his *love*, that was stronger than death. But all this was nothing to the angry countenance of his Father, nor would he ever have ventured upon that, if infinite love had not persuaded him. No wonder if the Apostle call it a love that passeth knowledge. *That you may know*, saith he, *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*. Eph. iii. 19. Know it we may, and should, but we must know withal, that we cannot know it fully. And this is our comfort, that it is greater than we can comprehend; for if it were not so, it would be less than we stand in need of. So much of his love we may understand, as may abundantly inflame our hearts with love to him. For this purpose hath he revealed it, and made His *name like an ointment poured out*. And that is the second thing.

II. *His name*. That is, the report and manifestation of his excellencies. And if you will take it properly of his name, *Jesus*, and *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, it is true of them, for they are significative of these excellencies. Ask an afflicted conscience, if *Jesus*, that is, *a Saviour*, be not a precious word that hath a sovereign value, both a refreshing smell and a healing virtue. The hammer of the Law may break a stony heart in pieces, but it is only the blood of Jesus that can soften it. And where it is effectually poured, either upon a wounded soul, it heals it, or upon a hard heart, it mollifies it. For that other name, *Christ*, well may it be called *an ointment poured out*, for it signifies his *anointing*. And that the sweet savour of this name may affect, read but that one passage, Isa. lxi. 1. *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, &c. What inestimable riches of consolation are there in each of those effects to which Christ was anointed! And yet, we find not a word among them all for a proud, stiff-necked sinner. Here are *good tidings*, but it is to *the meek;* comfortable *binding up*, but it is for the *broken-hearted; liberty*, but it is for *captives* and *prisoners* groaning under their chains, and desirous to be delivered; not for such as

delight in their bondage. There is *oil of joy* and *garments of praise*, but they are provided for *mourning*, *dejected spirits* that need them; not for the impenitent. On the contrary, there is a terrible word interjected in the midst of these promises. *The day of vengeance of our God;* and that is the portion of Christ's enemies, and such are all incorrigible sinners.

Thus it is, at the same banquet from which you come, one may be filled with spiritual joy, and the very person that sits next, may be filled with a secret curse, and return more miserable than he came. But let the disconsolate, lamenting sinner lift up his head, and behold Christ, the Son of God, anointed a *prophet*, to preach salvation and liberty to such, a *priest*, to purchase it, and a *king*, to give it.

Now, the *pouring out* of his name is divers. Before the coming of the Messiah, his name was poured out in prophecies and promises, in types and legal ceremonies; but more fully when the *Word was made flesh*. Then angels, and holy men, yea, and women, spake clearly of him. What was his Father's voice at his baptism, the Holy Ghost's descending, what was his own preaching, and miracles, and conversation, but all the pouring forth of his precious name? And in his sufferings and death, what think you? Was not his name then poured forth, yea, his blood with it? Yes, truly: being extended on the cross, and his body pierced in divers places, his precious ointments were shed abroad towards all the quarters of the world: their smell reached both Heaven and the visible earth. God the Father, as He was said to do in Noah's sacrifice, did much more smell in his sacrifice, a savour of rest, appeasing his wrath; and all believers a savour of peace, a quieting of their consciences. And as aromatic spices, when they are pounded out and beaten, send forth their sweet smells most liberally, so, in these his sufferings, did the *obedience*, *patience*, and *love*, and all the *graces*, and the *name* of our Saviour, most clearly manifest themselves to the world. After he was dead, they embalmed his body, but they knew not that his own virtue would do more than all the ointments and spices in the world could do, not only by preserving his body from corruption, but by raising it the third day. And truly, after his resurrection, his own disciples knew his name better than ever before; and yet more fully after his ascension, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them; which was poured from Heaven on them for this very end; that they might pour forth Christ's name to the ends of the earth. Acts ii. 8. And they did so, carrying this precious *treasure in earthen vessels*, as that elect vessel St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. iv. 7. And ever since, God hath continued the pouring forth of his name, by the ministry and preaching of the Gospel. It is true, there are too many of those that are employed in this work, who seek themselves, and their own ends, rather than His glory whom they preach. And they that are more upright, the very best of them are sinful men. But how mean and unworthy soever they be, despise not the Gospel. Let the sweet name which they pour forth, prevail for itself, that so you may reverence and love it, if you would have *salvation* by it; and *there is no other name under heaven*, by which *that* can be obtained.

As this name is poured forth in the *gospel preached*, so, in the *sacra-*

ments annexed to it; and particularly in this, when the bread is broken, and the wine poured out. And was not this the earnest desire of the receivers of it this day,—it should have been,—to have our share in it, for the refreshment and curing of our souls? Nor shall any that came thus, be disappointed. And if not immediately, yet, most certainly, and that in due time, they shall find the sweet fruits of it.

You have heard many ways how the name of Christ is poured out, yet there is one more, without which all the rest are ineffectual; it is this, the secret and powerful working of the Spirit of God in the soul. The ordinances and means of salvation do indeed pour forth the name of Christ round about a man, but till the Spirit concur with them, not one drop falls within the soul. And is he not so much the more miserable, who hears much of Christ, and partakes nothing of him? Yes, surely. A man may have much common knowledge of Christ, and may understand well, yea, may preach well, concerning his worth and graces, and yet, not *love* Him. But there is a particular knowledge of Him by the infusion of the Spirit, and where the smallest measure of this is, it presently wins the affection. There is *a shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts*, that the Apostle speaks of, Rom. v. 5; and this draws us after Him; for our love to God is nothing else but the reflection of His love to us. So then, though many hear of Christ, yet, because there are but few that have this special knowledge of him, therefore it is, that so few do truly esteem him and love him; and they are such as are here called Virgins: and that is the third thing.

III. The correspondence in the character of those who love Christ: *The Virgins.* Similitude and conformity of nature, begets friendship: pure affections delight in a pure object, and it makes them such. For the truth is, Christ doth not find men naturally suitable to himself, but as he took on our nature, so he washeth away the sinfulness of our nature, which he took not on, and makes us that way conformable to his nature. And they who are so changed, though they were formerly lovers of sin, yet, by conversion, which is called regeneration, they are born again, and so become not only chaste, but even *virgins*, spiritually. For by *virgins*, here, are not meant such as Romish votaries fancy them to be: no, this virginity may well consist with any lawful state of life.

These virgins are such as be truly holy and pure in heart and life, who, though they are not perfectly free from all sin, yet have affection to no sin. These are singularly delighted with the smell of Christ's name and graces, while the voluptuous person, and the profane worldling, dislike and despise it! *Balsama sic suibus, sic male nardus olent.* The virgins, they bestow their affection whole and entire upon Christ.

How grossly do you delude yourselves, who make your hearts dens of pride, filthy lust, malice and envy, and thousands of vanities, and yet think to find a corner in them to lodge Christ too! Truly, you would both straiten him in room, and give him very bad neighbours. No; they that think not a whole heart too little for him, shall never enjoy him.

The Virgins love thee.] Grace destroys not the natural passions of the soul, but corrects them only, by destroying their corruption, and so

they become not merely not contrary to grace, but are made the subject and seat of grace. This of love, which is the chief of them, we see, it abolisheth not, but rectifies it, recalling it to its due object, and turning it into the right channel, by which it may empty itself into the ocean of goodness.

And this love may well consist with the purity of virgins; yea, it is this love that purifies and makes them such. *The Virgins love*—But whom? *Thee.* And it is as reasonable a love as it is pure; *Therefore they love Thee*, because thou hast made them in some measure apprehensive of thy worth, which commands the love of all that know it; not a cold and indifferent affection, but a superlative, ardent love, far over-topping all their other desires. And with good reason, since Christ doth infinitely, and beyond all comparison, surpass all other things desirable. Ask your own hearts, if you love Christ thus: for if not thus, you love him not at all. The Apostle St. Paul's love was of this size. Phil. iii. 7, 8. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* This love will not only undergo difficulties and sufferings for Christ without either repining or fainting, but it will even be glad to meet with them, as opportunity is, to exercise and testify itself. Hard things will seem most easy for his sake, and bitter things exceeding sweet. In a word, to him that loves, scarce any thing is impossible. Love is the leading passion of the soul: all the rest confirm themselves to it, *desire*, and *hope*, and *fear*, and *joy*, and *sorrow*.

If, then, you love Christ, the desires and breathings of your soul after him are strong and earnest. If he withdraw himself, or appear angry, if either you see him not, or see him look discontented, your grief will be so deep that it cannot be allayed by any worldly employments. Yet, upon some former tokens of his love, which is known to be unchangeable, hope will uphold the soul, till the beams of his grace scatter the cloud, and break through. Though our *Joseph* seem strange, and speak roughly for awhile, he cannot long refrain discovering his affection.

Again, love you him, unspeakable will be your joy when he smiles upon you. As great will be your delight in possession, as your desire is in pursuit; and while you have his presence, it will be too hard a task for any affliction to dismay you. Have you indeed heard Christ speak comfortably to you this day at his holy table? How will this enable the soul, and arm it against dangers, and distracting, distrustful fears! *Perfect love casteth out fear*, saith St. John: 1 John iv. 18: that is, all base and servile fear; but there is one fear that is in no heart but where love begets it, fear to offend. You know how wary and loth men are naturally to displease those they love; therefore it is, that love to Christ, and a careful observing of his commandments, are inseparable companions. Yea, love itself is the *fulfilling of the law*, for it gives up the heart to God, and consequently the whole man. Then there is no return of duty which your receiving of Christ calls for, (and what doth it not call for?) there is none, I say, but is comprised under this one of *love*. Do you owe him praises? Yes, surely. Then

love him; that will stir you up to praise him. You never knew, but where much love was in the heart, it made the tongue ready and active upon all occasions to praise the party loved. Love will entertain small courtesies with great thanks; much more where the benefit so far exceeds all possible thankfulness. Ought you to serve and obey him? Doubtless: he hath for that purpose redeemed you with his precious blood. And truly there is no obedience or service so full and so cheerful, as that which flows from love. Should you study conformity to Christ, and labour to be like him? Yes, for this is to walk worthy of Christ. Then there is nothing assimilates so much as love. Men delight in their society whom they love, and by their society they do insensibly contract their customs, and become like them. These Virgins who love Christ for his graces, they love to converse with him, and by conversing with him, they receive of his graces, and have a smell of his perfumes. Not only do they, by the smell of his garments, or such imposed rites, obtain the blessing, but they likewise smell like him by the participation of sanctifying grace, of his wisdom and holiness, in a pure and godly conversation, abstaining from the impure lusts and pollutions of the world; so likewise of his meekness and humility. Never think that one and the same soul can have much pride and much of Christ. Ever, the more grace a man hath, the more sense hath he likewise of his own unworthiness, and God's free mercy, and consequently, the more humility.

If you love Christ, you cannot choose but be like him in love to your brethren. This is expressly compared by the Psalmist, to the *precious ointment poured upon Aaron's head, that ran down to the very skirts of his garments.* Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Our Head and High Priest, the Lord Jesus, hath incomparably testified his love to believers whom he is pleased to call his *brethren.* They are far from equalling him, either in love to him, or in love one to another, but they do imitate him in both. This is his great commandment, *that we love one another, even as he loved us,* which is expressed both as a strong motive and a high example. It is not possible that a spirit of malice and implacable hatred can consist with the love of Christ.

Finally, Should you be ready to suffer for Christ? Yes. Then love is that which will enable you; and if you were inflamed with this fire then, though burned for him, that fire would only consume your dross, and be soon extinguished; but this would endure for ever.

By these and the like evidences, try whether you indeed love the Lord Jesus Christ. And by these fruits, you who profess to love him, testify the sincerity of your love; and be assured, that if you be now found amongst these Virgins that love him, you shall one day be of the number of those Virgins that are spoken of, Rev. xiv. 3, 4, who sing a new song before the throne of God.

If you hate the defilements of the world, and be not polluted with inordinate affection to the creature, it shall never repent you to have made choice of Christ. He shall fill your hearts with peace and joy in believing. When you come to his house and table, he shall send you home with joy and sweet consolation, such as you would not exchange for crowns and sceptres. And after some few of these running banquets here below, you shall enter into the great marriage-supper of

the Lamb, where faith shall end in sight, and hope in possession, and love continue in perpetual and full enjoyment; where you shall be never weary, but for ever happy in beholding the face of the Blessed Trinity: to whom be glory. Amen.

SERMON IX.

PREFACE.

How true is that word of our Saviour, who is truth itself, *Without me, ye can do nothing*:—severed from me, as that branch that is not in me. They who are altogether out of Christ, in spiritual exercises do nothing at all. 'Tis true, they may pray and hear the word, yea, and preach it too, and yet in so doing they do nothing, nothing in effect. They have the matter of good actions, but it is the internal form gives being to things. They are but a number of empty words and a dead service to a living God. For all our outward performances and worship of the body are nothing but the body of worship, and therefore nothing but a carcass, except the Lord Jesus, by his Spirit, breathe upon it the breath of life. Yea, the worshipper himself is spiritually dead till he receive life from Jesus, and be quickened by his Spirit. If this be true, then it will follow necessarily, that where numbers are met together, (as here,) pretending to serve and worship God, yet He hath very few that do so indeed, the greatest part being out of Christ; and such being without him, they can do nothing in his service.

Rom. viii. 7.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The ordinary workings and actions of creatures are suitable to their nature, as the ascending of light things, and the moving of heavy things downwards; so, the vital and sensitive actions of things that have life and sense. The reasonable creature, it is true, hath more liberty in its actions, freely choosing one thing and rejecting another; yet it cannot be denied, that in the acting of that liberty, their choice and refusal follow the sway of their nature and condition. As the angels and glorified souls, their nature being perfectly holy, and unalterably such, they cannot sin, they can delight in nothing but in obeying and praising that God, in the enjoyment of whom their happiness consisteth, still ravished in beholding His face. The saints, again, that have not yet reached that home, and are but on their journey, they are not fully defecated and refined from the dross of sin: there are in them two parties, *natural corruption*, and *supernatural grace;* and these keep a struggling within them. But the younger shall supplant the elder: Grace shall in the end overcome; and in the mean while, though it be not free from mixture, yet it is predomi-

nant. The main bent of a renewed man, is, obedience and holiness, and any action of that kind he rejoices in; but the sin that escapes him, he cannot look upon but with regret and discontent. But alas! they that be so minded, are very thin sown in the world. Even in God's peculiar fields, where the labourage of the gospel is, and the outward profession of true religion unanimously received, yet, the number of true converts, spiritual-minded persons, is very small; the greatest part acting sin with delight, and taking pleasure in unrighteousness, living in disobedience to God, as in their proper element; and the reason is, the contrariety of their nature to our holy Lord. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.*

The mind, φρονημα. Some render it the *prudence*, or *wisdom* of the flesh. Here you have it, *the carnal mind*. But the word signifies, indeed, an act of the mind, rather than either the faculty itself, or the habit of prudence in it, so as it discovers what is the frame of both these, the *minding;* as it is used, ver. 5, conformably to that of Moses, Gen. vi., *Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually*. The word indeed signifies the *wise thoughts*. So then, take the full latitude of it thus: *The carnal mind*, in its best and wisest thoughts, is direct *enmity against God*.

Carnal [της σαρκος.] What is meant by the *flesh* here? It is the whole *corrupt nature* of man; and *that* we may know by its opposition to the *Spirit:* not to the spirit or soul of a man, for so it hath no *thoughts* nor *minding*, these being proper to the soul, but opposed to the Spirit of God.

Now, the corruption of nature is called the *flesh*, not without very good reason, not only to signify the baseness of it, the flesh being the more ignoble and meaner part of a man, but because the greatest part of the sins of men's lives, are about sensitive objects and things that concern the flesh or the body. It lets in temptation of sin to the soul by the doors of the senses, and it gives the last perfection or accomplishment to sin, by the external acting of it. The very first sin, that brought in death and misery with it upon mankind, the pleasures of the *eye* and of the *taste*, were sharers in the guiltiness of it.

The carnal mind.] Man in regard of his composition, is, as it were, the tie and band of Heaven and earth: they meet and are married in him. A body he has taken out of the dust, but a soul is breathed into him from Heaven, from the *Father of Spirits:* a house of clay, but a guest of most noble extraction. But the pity is, it hath forgot its original, and is so drowned in flesh, that it deserves no other than to go under the name of flesh. It is become the slave and drudge of the body, and like the Israelites in Egypt, made perpetually to moil in clay. What is all your merchandise, your trades and manufactures, your tillage and husbandry, but all for the body, in its behalf, for food and raiment? In all these, the mind must be careful and thoughtful, and yet properly they reach it not, for itself hath no interest in them. It is true, the necessity of the body requires much of these things, and superfluous custom far more; but it is lamentable that men force their soul to forget itself and its proper business, to attend to these things only, and be busy in them. They spend all their time, and their choicest pains, upon perishing things, and which is worse, engage

their affections to them. They *mind earthly things, whose end is destruction.* Phil. iii. 18:—the same word is here, *φρονημα της σαρκος.*

Will you consider seriously, that your souls run the hazard of perishing, because you consider not their spiritual nature? When that earthly tabernacle of yours shall fall to the ground, (and ere long it must,) your souls must then enter eternity, and though you had as large a share of earthly things as your earthly hearts now would wish, they will all lose their use in that moment. They are not a proper good for the soul at any time, and least at that time. If you keep it, all your life long, busy about the interest and benefit of the flesh, the body, how poor will it be when they part, having provided nothing at all for itself, but the guiltiness of a sinful life, which will sink it into that bottomless pit! Be forewarned then: *For to be carnally minded is death.* Ver. 6, preceding the text.

The carnal mind. Now, as sin hath debased and degenerated the soul of man, making it carnal, so, the Son of God, by taking on our nature, hath sublimated it again, and made it spiritual. The souls that receive him are spiritualized; yea, as sin made the soul carnal, grace makes the very body to become spiritual, making it partaker and co-worker in spiritual things together with the soul, in doing and suffering, and participant of the hopes, too, of an everlasting reward. This is the main Christian character our Apostle gives here, that they are *spiritually minded*, and that their actions suit their minds: *They walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Whereas before, with the rest of the world, they were eager in the pursuit of honours, and profits, and worldly pleasures, the new stream of their desires runs in another channel. They seek after honour, and are very ambitious of it; but it is such honour the Apostle speaks of in this Epistle, ch. ii. ver. 7. *By patient continuance in well doing they seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.* Their mind is upon profit and gain; but it is with the same Apostle, Phil. iii. 8, that they *may win Christ*, and they account all other things *loss* in comparison. And their desires are after pleasure too, but not *carnal pleasures;* these are both base, and of short continuance, but the pleasures they aim at, are those that are *at God's right hand, and for evermore*, Psal. xvi. 11; and that *path of life* which the Psalmist there speaks of, that way of holiness which leads thither, is their delight. Spiritual exercises they go to, not as their task only, but more as their joy and refreshment. And this change the Spirit of God works in the soul, making it, yea, and the body wherein it dwells, of carnal, to become spiritual: as fire, to which the Holy Ghost is compared, refines sand and ashes, and makes of them the purest glass, which is so neat and transparent.

Enmity against God.] Sin hath not only made us unlike God, by defacing His beautiful image in us, not only strangers, by making us wander far off from Him, but *enemies;* nor enemies only, but *enmity* in the abstract; for that is emphatical, *The carnal mind is enmity*, nothing else but enmity.

Now, this enmity is described in the latter clause of the text, by an antipathy, so to call it, or non-compliance with the law of God: *It is not subject to the Law of God, neither can it be*, to wit, while it remains such. There is an absolute impossibility in it, to suit with the Law of

God, and consequently with God himself. The reason lies in their opposite qualities. God is *spiritual* and *holy*, and so is the Law, as our Apostle hath it in the preceding chapter; and the opposition he there makes betwixt his unregenerate part and the Law, is wholly true of the ungenenerate man. *The Law is holy*, says he, ver. 12, and 14, *The Law is spiritual;* to which too he opposes, *But I am carnal, sold under sin.*

Where are now those who so vilify grace and magnify nature? Or, shall I rather say, nullify grace, and deify nature? Here is the best eulogy the Apostle will bestow upon the best of natures, *Enmity against God.* Nay, all the sparkles of virtue and moral goodness in civil men and ancient heathens are no better; besides many other things to be said of the virtues of those philosophers, as ignorance of Christ, by whom alone this enmity is removed.

I should easily confess, nor, I think, can any deny it, that there is in the very ruins of our nature, some character left of a tendency to God as our chief and only satisfying good, which we may call a kind of love, and when we hear Him spoken of, we find it flutter and stir; and hence men so abhor the imputation of hating God and being His enemies. Yet, this is so smothered under sensuality and flesh, that until we be made spiritual, nothing appears but practical and (as they call it) interpretative enmity.

There is one thing which stains them enough; they were all, as that Father speaks, *animalia gloriæ:* they aimed not, in their study of virtue, at God's glory, but at their own; and is not that quarrel enough, and matter of enmity? Says not He, *My glory I will not give unto another?*

But that is most useful for you, to convince you of that too good conceit which men have of their natural condition. You would take it hardly, the most profane of you all, if any should come to you in particular, and tell you, you are an enemy to God; but I answer, there is none of you, if you believe the Scriptures, but will confess that all men are naturally such, and therefore, except we find in ourselves a notable alteration from the condition of nature, we must take with it, that we are enemies, yea, *enmity* to God. Of strangers, to become acquainted with Him, yea, which is more, of enemies to become friends, is a greater and more remarkable change, than to be incident to a man without any evidence and sign of it. I know there is very great variety in the way and manner of conversion; and to some, especially if it be in their tender years, grace may be instilled and dropt in, as it were, insensibly. But this I may confidently say, that whatsoever be the way of working it, there will be a wide and apparent difference betwixt friendship with God, and the condition of nature, which is enmity against Him. Do not flatter yourselves. So long as your minds remain carnal, ardent in love to the world, and cold in love to God, *lovers of pleasures more than of God*, (as the Apostle speaks) you are His enemies, for with Him there is no neutrality. That which they say, taxing it as a weakness in the sex, *Aut amat, aut odit, nihil est tertium*, is in this case necessarily true of all. And this is God's prerogative, that He can judge infallibly of the inside. Those shadows of friendship men use one with another, will not pass with Him.

Deceived He cannot be, but men may easily; and alas! too many do deceive themselves in this matter, to their own ruin.

We may learn hence, how deep sin goes into our nature, and consequently, that the cure and remedy of it must go as deep; that all the parts of our bodies and all the powers of our souls are polluted originally, our very *mind* and *conscience*, as the Apostle speaks, for it is immersed in flesh, and enslaved to flesh, naturally, and therefore it goes under its name. We are become all *flesh;* that is the spring of our mischiefs. We have lost our likeness to our Father, the Father of Spirits, the purest and most spiritual Spirit, till renewed by participation of His Spirit in our flesh.

And it is the error, not only of natural men, but somewhat of the godly too, that in self-reformation they set themselves against actual sin, but they lay not the axe to the root of the tree, this root of bitterness, this our inbred and natural *enmity* against God; and till this be done, the lopping off of some branches will do no good: while the root is in vigour, those will grow again, and possibly faster than before. Bewail every known act of sin, as much as you can, for the least of them deserves it; but withal, let the consideration of them lead you into thoughts of this seed of rebellion, the wickedness of our nature, that takes life with us in the womb, and springs and grows up with us, and this will humble us exceedingly, and raise our godly sorrow to a higher tide. We find David taketh this course in the fifty-first Psalm: where he is lamenting his particular sin of adultery and murder, it leads him to the sinfulness of his nature, *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;* [or, warm me;] which he mentions, not to extenuate and diminish his sin; no, he is there very far from that strain, but adds it as a main aggravation. Indeed, the power of original sin in the regenerate, is laid very low, yet is it not altogether extinct, which they find often to their grief, and this makes them cry out with our Apostle, in the former chapter, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* The converted are already delivered (as he there adds) from the dominion of it, but not from the molestation and trouble of it. Though it is not a quiet and uncontrolled master, as it was before, yet it is in the house still, as an unruly servant or slave, ever vexing and annoying them; and this *body of death* they shall have still cause to bewail, till death release them. This leprosy hath taken so deep root in the walls of this house, that it cannot perfectly be cleansed till it be taken down; and it is this, more than any other sorrows or afflictions of life, that makes the godly man not only content to die, but desirous, longing, with our Apostle, *to be dissolved, and be with Christ, which is far better.*

As this teaches us the misery of man's nature, so it sets off and commends exceedingly the riches of God's grace. Are men naturally His enemies? Why then admire, first, His *patience* and *bounty* a little, and then we will speak of His *saving grace.* Could not He very easily ease Himself of His adversaries, as He says by the prophet? Isa. i. 24. Wants He power in His right hand to find out and cut off all His enemies? Surely no. Not only He hath power to destroy them all in a moment, but the very withdrawing of His hand, that upholds their being, (though they consider it not,) would make

them fall to nothing. Yet is He pleased not only to spare transgressors, but to give them many outward blessings, *rain and fruitful seasons*, as the Apostle speaks, Acts xiv. 17. And the earth which is so full of man's rebellion, is yet more full of God's goodness: *The earth is full of Thy goodness*, says the Psalmist. It is remarkable, that that same reason which is given, Gen. vi. 5, of the justice of God in drowning the world is, in chap. viii. 21, rendered as the reason of God's resolved patience ever since: *And the Lord said, I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

Then consider His *grace*, in finding a way of reconcilement, and not sparing His own Son, His only begotten Son, to accomplish it. Nor did the Son spare himself. O matchless love! to lay down his life, not for friends, but for strangers; not only so, but enemies, for unrighteous and ungodly persons, such as be at enmity against Him. Rom. v. 7, 8. And having done this, He sends his word, the message of reconciliation, to rebels, and sends His Spirit into the hearts of those whom He hath appointed to salvation, to change their spirits, that they perish not in disobedience: He brings *them near who were far off*, having slain this enmity by the death of His Son.

As many of you, then, as have hitherto heard this message of reconciliation in vain, be persuaded at last to give ear to it. This is all that God's ambassadors require, according to their instructions from Himself, that men would lay down their enmity against Him, and not be so foolish as wilfully to perish in it: *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. v. 20.

Consider that this enmity is, 1*st*, unjust, 2*dly*, unhappy. (1.) Unjust it is, being against Him who is the chief object of love, who is altogether goodness, both in Himself and towards his creatures. It is too much not to love Him with most ardent and superlative affection; but to entertain enmity against Him is madness. As it was said to one who asked, Why are the beautiful loved? *It is a blind man's question*; certainly we are blind if we see not cause enough, not only to desist from enmity, but to be inflamed with His love. One glance of His amiable countenance is sufficient to cause the most rebellious heart to yield, and lay down arms, and for ever devote itself to His services. No, we know Him not, and therefore it is we hold out against Him. Is He not the living spring of all our comforts? Have we not from Him, life, and breath, and all things? And is He not *ready to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin?* Let mercy melt our hearts to Him, those sweet rays of love. Let His loving kindness overcome these stubborn hearts and spirits of ours. Among enemies, the weaker usually seeks first for peace, but here it is the Mighty; Almighty God comes to entreat agreement with sinful clay.

(2.) But if this prevail not, then think how unhappy this enmity is. You who are so afraid of men, and those weak men, of men like yourselves, whose breath is in their nostrils, will ye not tremble at His power, and be afraid to continue on terms of hostility against Him who is the Lord of Hosts, who hath power both over soul and body, to kill both and cast them into hell? What is the stoutest of men, but as stubble to the flame of His wrath? *Our God is a consuming fire.*

Heb. xii. 29. *The sinners in Zion are afraid*, says the Prophet. *Who shall dwell*, say they, *with devouring fire and everlasting burnings?* Isa. xxxiii. 14. Then, if you would not perish, when his wrath is kindled, take that word of Eliphaz, Job xxii. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.*

And to you, so many as he hath taken into friendship with Himself, look backward to the gulf you have escaped, and forward to the happiness you are appointed to, and let the joint-consideration of both awaken your hearts and tongues to praises. How can your hearts contain such a wonder of love as He hath manifested to you, and not run over in songs and praise?

And, as you owe Him praises, so study, being made His friends, to become more like Him. That same *idem velle et idem nolle*, to love and hate the same things with Him, will be a sure testimony of friendship. And because carnality, or fleshly and earthly mindedness, is here made the character of enmity, mortify those affections, nail them to that cross of Christ whereby the enmity was taken away. And further, being once admitted into friendship, labour for a further degree of intimacy with Him, and forbear every thing that may hinder that. Use frequent converse with Him; for that both entertains and increases friendship. If any thing fall out on your part (as it too often does), that may occasion any strangeness betwixt you and your God, rest not till it be removed. And if you walk in this way, it shall undoubtedly, at length, bring you where you shall abide in His presence for ever, and shall no more fear any breach or interruption of enjoying Him. *To Him be praise!* Amen.

SERMON X.

Romans xiii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

The wisdom and goodness of God, which shine in the natural order and dependence of things in the frame of the great world, appear likewise, and commend themselves to us, in the civil order He hath instituted in the societies of men, the lesser world. As out of the same mass He made the heavens and the earth, and the other elements betwixt them, one higher than another, and gave them different stations and qualities, yet so different as to be linked and concatenated together, *concordia discordiâ*, and all for the concern and benefit of the whole; thus, for the good of men, hath the Lord assigned these different stations of rule and subjection (though all are of one race, Acts xvii. 26), raising from among men some above the rest, and clothing

them with such authority as hath some representment of Himself, and accordingly communicating to them His own name: *I have said, ye are gods.* And the very power that is in magistracy to curb and punish those that despise it, the Apostle useth as a strong and hard cord to bind on the duty of obedience, a cord of *necessity*. But he has another of a higher necessity, that binds more strongly, and yet more sweetly, that of *conscience*. *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*

Observe, 1. This is the main consideration which closes the discourse, the great cord that binds on and fastens all the rest; all the arguments foregoing, therefore, are mainly here to be pressed. Have a reverential and conscientious respect to the ordinance of God in the institution of Government, and to the providence of God in His choice of those particular persons whom He calls to it. Contain thyself in thy own station, and submit to those set higher by the Lord, in obedience to Him. This, indeed, is the only true spring of all obedience, both to God, and to men for Him, and according to His ordinance. To regulate the outward carriage, without the living principle of an enlightened and sanctified conscience within, is to build without a foundation. This is the thing God eyes most. He looks through the surface of men's actions to the bottom, follows them into their source, examines from what motives and reasons they flow. He sees not only the handle of the dial, but all the wheels and weights of the clock that are the cause of its motion, and accordingly judges both men and their actions to be good or evil, as the inward frame and secret motions of the heart are. In His own worship, the outside of it may have the same visage and plausible appearance in a multitude convened to it and concurring in it, and no human eye can trace a difference; and yet, Oh, what vast difference doth God's eye discover amongst them! He sees the multitude of those who are driven to His house by the power of civil and church laws, or carried to it only with the stream of company and custom; (and these, I fancy, take up the most room in our churches;) but He sees here and there, where such are in any corner, who worship Him in singleness of heart, out of conscience to His holy command, and under a sense of their many obligations, those who dare not let pass any opportunity they can reach, of doing service to their Lord, and who dare not slight His word, and thus coming *for conscience' sake*, they do present their souls to receive His word, give their hearts up to receive the impression of it, put themselves under it, to be stamped by it according to that, Rom. vi. 17: *But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* So, likewise, He sees those who bear His name to His people, the ministers of His word. If they preach constantly, and live blamelessly, and are diligent and irreprovable in all the external parts of their walking, this last satisfies men's questions in their inspection and visitings; but God's inquiry and visiting searches deeper. He asks from what heart all this comes, whether from a holy conscience of the weight and high importance of their holy calling, and a faithful respect to the interest of their Master's glory and His people's souls. And thus, He, as supreme judge, sits and considers the proceedings of judges and magistrates; not only whether

they do that which is just (for often they cannot, easily or safely, do otherwise), but whether they do it with regard to Him or not; that is, whether they judge righteously, *for conscience' sake*, or not; whether they do consider Him, as sitting above them, when they sit down upon the bench or seat of justice, and *do indeed* truly *speak righteousness*, Psal. lviii. 1, or whether in heart they work wickedness. If they have any corrupt end, or hearts that are not straight, He sits on their heart and judges it; whether this be done either for base gain, or vain glory, or by compulsion, or outward necessity, or danger of censure, or whether it be this latter, an inward *necessity of conscience*, which makes a true willingness.

Thus people, if they obey *for wrath*, that is, for fear of the magistrate's sword, more than *for conscience* of the Lord's command, God accounts not this obedience, but in His judgment it goes for no better than rebellion. It is to be feared, too many magistrates, and others, have in this nation embraced the Reformation, not at all for conscience' sake, but only for wrath, from fear of laws and authority. But although we are not able to follow forth this search to the full, that being the Lord's own prerogative, yet, truly, where it is evident to us that there is nothing of conscience, though in civil things it may pass, yet, in things that are peculiarly matters of conscience in religion, men ought to be somewhat wary, according to the utmost of due discerning; and we are, possibly, somewhat to blame in the promiscuous admitting of such, whose carriage, yea, whose profession and religion speaks aloud, that their compliance was wholly constrained obedience, only *for wrath*, and not *for conscience*.

If civil authority is to be obeyed most for conscience, then, church authority, that is more symbolical with conscience, and hath nearer reference to it, ought to aim most at that. *Conviction* and *conversion* is our work, and not *constraint;* to bring people, both by the word and by a way of discipline suiting and backing it, to a sense of sin and spiritual thoughts of God and His holy law, that they may be subject more for conscience than for wrath.

And ye people, labour more to find the actings of that holy fear of God and conscience of His will in all your ways. Study to have an inward light, a practical, sanctifying light, directing you; and be not merely held in as beasts, by the authority and laws of men, but learn to know and be sensible of the sovereign authority of the most high God and His law, and to have respect unto all His commandments. If this were once done, how regular a motion would it keep amongst all superiors and inferiors of all sorts, in families and states, the one commanding, the other obeying, in God! It would be as sweet music in the celestial choir of their lives and affairs. Right-informing and right-moving consciences would be as continual teachers within, directing all in obedience, and would make it both more constant, sweet, and pleasant, as natural motion; whereas that is grievous and violent which is from wrath, or outward power, and therefore lasts not: as the Israelites worshipped God aright while their good judges lived, and ran after idols when they were removed.

Again. This same obedience *for conscience* ennobles and sublimates men's actions even in civil things, makes them have somewhat

Divine, turns all into sacrifice to God, when all is done for God; even servants and children obeying masters and parents, and subjects magistrates, for His command's sake; still thinking, in the whole course of their regular, due carriage, in their very callings, This I do for God; my ordinary labour and works, and my just obedience to men, I offer up to Him. This is the philosopher's stone, that turns actions of lower metal into gold; *I set the Lord always before me.* Psal. xvi. 8.

Obs. 2. Kings, and other powers of the world, who are the enemies, and sometimes the enraged persecutors of our holy religion, mistake their quarrel, and are very wrongfully misprejudiced against it, when, upon that false supposition, they hate and oppose it, suspecting it as an enemy to their dignity and authority; whereas there is nothing that doth so much assert their just power as religion doth. Civil laws may tie the *hands* and *tongue* to their obedience, but religion binds all due subjection to them upon the very *consciences* of their people. Therefore they are both ungrateful and unwise, in using their power against religion, which it so much strengthens. Their power should strengthen it, both by way of due return, to correspond with it in that, and even for its own interest, receiving a new establishment to itself by establishing religion. Even that master of irreligious policy, Machiavel, confesses that the profession of religion is a friend to authority. But if the shadow of it do any thing that way, we see, contrary to his profane supposition, the substance and truth of it doth it much more.

Obs. 3. If *for conscience' sake* we are to practise this subjection, then, surely in nothing is it our duty to be subject against the true rule of conscience, and the prime object of conscience, the authority and law of God. That is the first and highest, our perpetual, unalterable engagement to Him, binding both kings and subjects, both high and low. And if rulers leave their station, we ought to keep ours still, in a straight subjection to God. For the extent of friendship and all other relations, and of all subjection and obedience, is to be ruled and bounded, *usque ad aras. Give to Cesar the things that are Cesar's*, but nothing of God's: that is neither ours to give, nor his to receive.

For, for this cause pay you tribute also. This the Apostle gives as a sign of that confessed right which magistrates have to the subjection and obedience of the people, that in all nations this homage and acknowledgment is due to them: *Tribute to whom tribute is due.* Which it may be he the rather mentions, because some question might exist, what might Christians do concerning this. However, this, according to the constitution of several places, he takes as granted, to be not only lawful, but due to be rendered. Here we are not to insist on the scanning of this; but certainly, as the power of a magistrate is not in this, nor in any other thing, absolute and unbounded, so, the legal and just paying of tribute and other revenues by the people, argues their engagement to those set over them, and is to be rendered, not as wages to a mercenary servant, but as an *honorary due* to their place and calling, who are the *ministers of God* in civil government. So, also, convenient yet liberal maintenance to the ministers of God's own house is their right, yet not to enrich them; nor yet ought it to be given grudgingly, as undue, or superciliously, as to servants, but with

the cheerfulness and respect agreeable to the Lord's servants, who watch for their souls.

All tribute and obedience still relate to this, and are grounded on it, the Lord's institution of power and government for the good of men. Though it sometimes prove otherwise in the exercise of it, yet the ordinance is pure, and most wisely suited to its end; from which the sin and corruption of men turn it but too often to the hurt of both the ruler himself and of the ruled. Eccl. viii. 9: *There is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt;* each proving a scourge to the other, in the just judgment of God upon both for their iniquities; making *a fire from Abimelech to devour the men of Shechem*, and the men of *Shechem* to deal treacherously with *Abimelech*. Judg. ix. 20. Yet, still the thing itself remains good. Many skilful physicians may kill instead of curing, yet it is but a caprice to decry all remedies, and the use of things medicinal, which the God of nature hath furnished for that use. Men may, and alas! most men do, prejudice their own health, by either intemperate or in some way irregular diet; yet this makes nothing against the continual necessity and use of food, nor can dissuade any from using it. Thus, the abuses of authority infringe not this, that magistrates are a public good; yea, the unjust are better than none, tyranny is better than anarchy; there is some justice done in the most unjust government.

But thus, they who are exalted to rule, ought to consider who raised them, and for what they are raised, and so faithfully to do justice. They are raised high, as the stars are set in their orbits, for influence and the good of the inferior world, and like the mountains which rise above the valleys, not to be places of prey and ruin, but, by the streams they send out, to refresh them. So, from magistrates, *judgment ought to run down as water, and justice as a mighty stream.* They ought to consider themselves as *ministers;* though called *magistrates* with relation to the people, yet *ministers* in relation to God, [λειτούργοι Θεοῦ] and the people's in Him, as the word λειτούργοι imports, being constant labourers for their good; even as the sun is a *minister*, God's minister of heat and light to the earth. Would they look up thus to God, it would make them look down on their inferiors, not with the ill aspect of pride and cruelty, but with the benign looks of good-will, fidelity, and vigilancy for their welfare, knowing that they are appointed for this very use in the world; not referring to that which is nearest here, and nearest themselves, *the receiving of tribute*, but the remotest good, which is the chief end for which their tribute and themselves are appointed, the punishing of the wicked and the encouragement of the good.

Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. The Apostle enlarges his exhortation to the general rule of equity. The humble, upright mind will willingly comply with this, and pay respect to men, in obedience to God, and therefore primarily to Him, which the most neglect. *Honour* and *fear* are due to Him as to our Father and Master, and yet where is it to be found? *If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?* Mal. i. 6. The *tribute* of praise and glory in all these respects is due, and

ought not to be purloined, nor any part detained; but how few are faithful in this! Much *uncustomed goods* pass among our hands in the course of our lives, many things wherein we are not mindful to give glory, entire glory to God. But He cannot be deceived: if we go on, He will take us in our quietest *conveyance*, and all will be forfeited. We shall certainly lose all, if all glory return not to Him. All that we have, and are, should we daily and heartily offer up to Him, from whom we have life, and breath, and all things.

Owe no man anything, but to love one another. That which the Apostle set before himself, as his own study and exercise, he doth, in the latter part of this Epistle, set forth at large, as the duty of every Christian, to *keep a conscience void of offence towards God and* men. Acts. xxiv. 16. And having, in the former part of it, treated amply and excellently of the doctrine of Christian faith and salvation, and ascended to its highest cause, he descends from thence to give the rules of a Christian life. And he reduces them to these two: 1. To give the Lord His due, which is, *ourselves entire:* our bodies ought to be *a living sacrifice*, and *that* they are not without the soul. And it is love in the soul, that offers up this whole burnt-offering to God, the fire that makes it ascend. 2. Towards men likewise, love is all. Of which, in many several acts of it, he spake likewise in the former chapter, ver. 9, &c.; and having inserted an exhortation to subjection to human authority as a Divine institution, he now returns to that main, comprehensive, and universal duty of love, and passes fitly from the mention of other particular dues to superiors, to this, as the general due, or standing debt, which all men owe one to another. So I conceive this is not intended for the further pressing of that particular duty of subjection, by reducing it (as seeming hard in itself) to the sweet and pleasant rule or law of love, but that he passes wholly from that particular to this common duty, so as that it is not excluded, but comprehended here with the rest, though not specially aimed at; a little rivulet running awhile in its own channel, in the foregoing discourse, which falls here in again to the main current of the doctrine of love, begun in the former chapter. And here he chooses, adapting it to the strain of the discourse immediately foregoing it, to express this under the notion of a debt: *Owe nothing, but love.*

1. Let other debt be removed: *Owe nothing.* That is, Be not willing to continue debtors of anything to any, by undue retaining of such things as, being paid, are not owing.

2. This is a constant debt, which you must still pay, and yet still owe—*love.* And the reason added, is most enforcing, that we should be willing to continue both *payers* and yet *debtors* of it. The dueness of it appears in this, that the *Law* requires it, and the completeness of it, in that it is *all* the Law requires: *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Which is amplified in the two subsequent verses.

This is most fully true, take love fully, as it looks on its full object, *God* and *Man;* and so it is the fulfilling of the whole Law which relates to those two in its two tables. Take it particularly, as acting towards men, (as here it is,) and so it fulfils that part of the Law, that whole table, which respects man. The most of those commandments are expressly here set down, (ver. 9,) and the omission of one

is fully supplied by that addition, *If there be any other.* Then again, it is cleared by the common aim and result of them all, which is to keep our neighbour undamaged, and *that*, love doth most surely and fully; therefore it fulfils all. That negative, *worketh no ill to his neighbour*, answers the strain of all the commandments, which is, to defend our neighbours from our *ill*, being most of them such, and all of them such that are here specified; yet both they, and this sum of them, involving the contrary, the working of all possible *good* to our neighbour; in which, still love suits it, nothing being both more averse from wrong, and more active in good, than love: as the same Apostle hath it, 1 Cor. xiii. Besides that it cannot *do*, no, nor so much as *think* evil, it is naturally carried to bounty and kindness, and cannot cease from doing good, a plant that is fruitful all the year long.

The Apostle hath very good authority for this abridgment of the Law; our Saviour himself, Matt. xxii. 40. And he takes it out of the books of the Law themselves, and certifies us, that it is the substance and sum both of the Law and the Prophets. Were this love absolutely perfect, the fulfilling of the Law would be so too; and where it is sincere, as the Apostle requires it, there is a sincere and evangelical obedience, or fulfilling of the Law.

In the text consider, 1. The largeness of its object. 2. The largeness of its acting. 3. The height of its true original.

1. The largeness of the object. So far as thou canst acquit thyself, owe nothing else to any; but love, *owe that to all.* Not a like familiar converse necessarily to all, nor a like measure of beneficence, nor a like degree of love, but yet love alike sincere and real to all. Not either a false, or an empty, fair carriage, but holy Christian love, love rooted in thy heart, and springing up in thy actions, even towards all men, as thy opportunity and ability serves thee, and their condition requires of thee; not hating nor despising any for their poverty in estate, or deformity of body, or defects of mind, nor for that which works most on men, injuries done to thyself. All they can do, cannot give thee an *acquittance*, or free thee of this *debt* of love; for thou art bound to Another. This is the rule of Jesus Christ, and the badge of Christians, to love their very enemies. But this, Oh, how rare is it! How few attain it! Yea, how few endeavour to attain it! On the contrary, it is by many given over as a desperate, impossible business, they judging of it not according to that Spirit of Christ that is his, but according to the corrupt rancour and bitterness of their own natural perverse spirits. Yea, and too many disdain it as a *poorness* and *sheepishness* of spirit to suffer and forgive. Be it so; yet is it such a *sheepishness* as makes a man like *Jesus Christ, who, as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*, when his heart within was compassionate towards them, as appeared when he opened it concerning them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* This is true greatness of spirit, to partake of *His* spirit that is the highest and best of spirits, and it is the spirit of *meekness* and *love.* How much is this above the common spirit of the world! Truly base and poor is that which is decomposed and put out of frame with every touch; whereas this is mighty, and triumphs indeed over all provocations and injuries.

2. Let us consider the largeness of its acting: it goes through the Law, fulfils it all. That command, the first in the second Table, which is not here expressed, is it not Love that makes all concerned in it, to fulfil it, that produceth mildness and moderation in superiors, and faithfulness and willing obedience in inferiors; makes both authority and subjection sweet and easy, where love commands and love obeys?

And for the next, *Thou shalt not kill*, doth not love, as the sunbeams put out the fire, by its Divine heat eat out the earthly, yea, the infernal fire of fixed malice or rash anger, that burns naturally in the hearts of men? Such anger is called *brutish*, Ezek. xxi. 31; *burning* or *brutish;* and, on the contrary, the ambiguity, Prov. xvii. 27, is happy, *of an excellent* or *of a cool spirit;* for the *cool spirit* is so, cool from base passion, but burning truly with this love. And then this fire is by very small, and many times merely imaginary causes, so easily blown up, that it flames forth into gross murders, or at least such injuries and violences, or contentions and revilings, as go in God's account, and are writ down in His book, for murders. And He doth not misjudge, nor misname things, but they are really what He accounts them. Love can generously pass over those things about which folly and pride makes such a noise, *Oh! can I bear this and that?* And thou wouldest, by so saying, speak thy stout-heartedness. Fool, is this stoutness and strength? Is it not rather the greatest weakness to be able to bear nothing? Have not the weakest persons much of that kind of stoutness and strength, who are the soonest moved and disquieted, women and children, and sick or aged persons? But love, Christian love to thy brother, makes the mind truly strong and composed, not easily stirred against him for every trifle, nay, not for greater matters. Love can *endure* much, yea, *all things*, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7; it hath strength to stand under them, and stand firm; whereas base minds, void of love, break all to pieces under a very small weight. Love *beareth all things*, as the supporters of a strong and firm building; or rather, as a house, it *covers all*, for so the word signifies. It doth not blaze abroad the failings of men; yea, it *hides* much, *covers a multitude of sins*, not only from the eyes of others, but even from a man's own eyes; makes him not behold and look on those things that might provoke him. Yea, it is ingenious and inventive of the fairest constructions of things, to take them by the best side, in the favourable sense; and so long as there is any agreeable way to interpret anything favourably, will not have a hard thought of it, *thinks no ill*, as there it is. Not only hath it no active evil thoughts of revenge, or returning evil, but willingly it doth not *judge ill* of what is done by others, and what might be so looked on as to provoke: ὁ λογίζεται, doth not *reckon* wrongs so high as want of charity moves the most to do, it *sets them low*. And as a healthful constitution is sweet itself, and relishes all things right, so there is more true pleasure and content of mind, in forgiving, than ever any man found in revenge. This is but a feverish delight which malice and anger have wrought, working perhaps greedily, but it is indeed a distemper. This love is the very root of peace and concord, a humble grace, that is not *lifted up* and *insolent*, as the word there is, and so

doth not breed jars about punctilios: it esteems so well of others, and so meanly of itself, that it cannot well be crossed by any in that matter of undervaluing. But vain spirits are puffed up with a little approbation, and as easily kindled up with any affront or apprehended disgrace. Love is not lightly put out of temper, as, in sickly constitutions, a fit of fever or ague is brought on by any blast or wrong touch of diet: it is of a stronger digestion, and firmer health.

Then for that commandment, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, all things of that kind, though they spring from a kind of love, yet are not from this love *from above*, but (as the Apostle James distinguishes wisdom) proceed from the love that is *sensual* and *devilish*. *Love* is not the true name of it, but base and brutish *lust*. And generally, all profane societies, and sortings of men one with another, are most contrary to this pure love. The drunkards who are cup-friends, as they are full of jars, and have no constancy, but are unstable as that wherein their friendship lies, their liquor, are a vile, despicable society, not worthy of men, much less of Christians. This sin hath affinity with uncleanness, and is usually ranked there. Right love to a tippler, is not to sit down and guzzle with him, but to reprove and labour to reclaim him, and where that cannot be done, to avoid him. To wicked persons we owe, not a complacency or delight, which is most contrary to this love, but, hating their sin, we owe them love, and the desiring, and, as far as love can, the procuring of their conversion and salvation. Wicked converse cannot consist with this love, which is the fulfilling of the law, and not a combination for the breaking of it, and the joining of their strength together for that end. Love *rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth:* it makes not men rejoice together in sin. So foul, unclean affections, and a society in order to the gratifying them, are most contrary to it. True love is most tender of the chastity of others, and cannot abide an impure thought in itself.

So, as to the next precept, *Thou shalt not steal*, love would be loth to enrich or advantage itself upon the damage of others in any kind. It doth most faithfully and singly seek the profit and prosperity of our neighbour, even as our own. And if this took place, of how much use were it in the world! But Oh! it is rare. This *meum* and *tuum* is the grand cause of the ill understanding and discords that are amongst men, when things are not managed by this love, but by self-love.

And so, as to that, *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, the cherishing and preserving of the good name of our brethren, is a proper and very remarkable fruit of this love, which is so far from forging false, defaming stories, that it will rather *excuse*, if it may be done, or if not, will *pity* the real failings of men which tend to their reproach; and, on the contrary, will teach men to rejoice in the good carriage and good esteem of their brethren, as in their own.

In the end, love works such a *complacency* in the good of others, and such a *contentation* with our own estate, that it most powerfully banishes that unruly humour of *coveting*, which looks on the condition of others with envy, and on our own with grudging and discontent. This law of love written within, doth not only rectify and order the hands and the tongue, but the jealousies, the very stirrings of the heart: it corrects the usual disorder of its motion, and bars those un-

charitable, inordinate thoughts, that do so abound and swarm in carnal minds.

3. The *original* of this love, is that other love which corresponds to the other part, the first and chief point of the Law, our *duty towards God*. Love to Him is the sum and source of all obedience. When the whole soul and mind is possessed with that, then all is acceptable and sweet that He commands; first, what He commands as immediately referrible to Himself, and then, what is the rule of our carriage to men, as being prescribed and commanded by Him. For so, and no otherwise, is this love *the fulfilling of the Law*, when it flows from that *first* love, love to God, whose law it is that commands this other love to men. Some men may have somewhat like it, by a mildness and ingenuousness of nature, being inoffensive and well-disposed towards all; but then only doth it fulfil the Law, when out of regard to the Law of God it obeys, and obeys out of love to Him whose law it is. So, then, the love of God in the heart, is the spring of right and holy love to our neighbour, both, (1.) Because in obedience to Him whom we love sovereignly, we shall love others sincerely, because He will have it so. That is reason enough to the soul possessed and taken up with His love. It loves nothing, how lovely soever, but in Him and for Him, in order and subordination to His love, and in respect to His will; and it loves any thing, how unlovely soever, taking it in that contemplation. It loves not the dearest friend but in God, and can love the hatefullest enemy for Him: *Amicum in Deo, et inimicum propter Deum.* [Augustine.] His love can beautify the most unamiable object, and make it lovely. He saith of a worthless, undeserving man, or thy most undeserving enemy, Love him for My sake, because it pleases Me; and that is reason enough to one who loves Him. (2.) There is that dilating, sweetening virtue in love to God, that it can act in no other way to men but as becomes love. Base self-love contracts the heart, and is the very root of all sin, the chief wickedness in our corrupt nature; but the love of God assimilates the soul to Him, makes it Divine, and therefore bountiful, full of love to all. So these two contradict not, *Love the Lord with all thy heart*, and *thy neighbour as thyself*. If all our love must go to God, what remains, say you, for our neighbour? Indeed, all must go upwards, and be all placed on Him, and from thence it is resounded and regulated downwards to men, according to His will. But self-love brings forth pride, and cruelty, and covetousness, and uncleanness, and disdain of others, and all such kind of monsters; so, it is the main breaking of the Law.

All that can be said, will not persuade men to this, till the Lord by His love teach it and impress it on the heart. Know that this is the badge of Christ's followers, and his great rule and law given to them; and if you will follow him, that you may come to be where he is, then study this, that as our Lord Christ loved us, so, also, we ought to love one another.

SERMON XI.

PREFACE.

GREAT and various are the evils that lodge within the heart of man. Hence proceed *evil thoughts, adulteries, murders*, and many other mischiefs, as our Saviour specifies there, Matt. xv. 19: they come forth apace, and yet, the heart is not emptied of them. But was this heart thus at first, when it came newly forth of the hands of its Maker? Surely not. *Man was made upright, but he found out many inventions.* Eccl. vii. 29. Soon did the heart find the way to corrupt itself; but to renew itself, is as impossible as to have been the author of its own creation. Easily could it deface the precious characters of God's image, but it passes the art of men and angels to restore them. Only the Son of God, who for that purpose took on him our nature, can make us, according to the Apostle's phrase, *partakers of the Divine nature.* It is He alone that can banish those unclean spirits, and keep possession that they return no more. Have not they made a happy change of guests, who have those infernal troops turned out of doors, and the King of Glory fixing his abode within them? This is the voice of the Gospel: *Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may enter in.* Psal. xxiv. 7. But small is the number of those who open where this voice is daily sounded. Yea, some there are, who grow worse under the frequent preaching of the word, as if sin were emulous, and, as is said of virtue, would grow by opposition. The truth is, too many of us turn these serious exercises of religion into an idle divertisement. Take heed that formality, and custom, and novelty, do not often help to fill up many rooms in our church. It were indeed a breach of charity, to entertain the fulness of your assemblies with an ill construction: no, it is to be commended. But would to God we were more careful to show our religion in our lives, to study to know better the deceits and impostures of our own hearts, and to gain daily more victory over our secret and best beloved sins! Let our intentions, then, be to meet with Christ here, and to admit him gladly to dwell and rule within us. If he conquer our inward enemies, those without shall not be able to hurt us. If he deliver us from our sinful lusts, he will stir our own distrustful fears. And that such may be the fruits of our meeting, let us turn ourselves towards the throne of grace, with humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, the righteous.

PSALM lxxvi. 10.

Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.

What manner of man is this, said the passengers in the ship, *that even the winds and the sea obey him?* Matt. viii. 27. Christ suddenly turns a great tempest into a greater calm. Surely, those are no ordinary words of command, which swelling waves and boisterous winds, in the midst of their rage, are forced to hear, and taught to understand and

obey. Therefore, the holding of the seas in the hollow of His hand, the bridling of the wind, and riding upon the wings of it, we find peculiarly attributed to the Almighty. But no less, if not more wonderful, is another of His perogatives, to wit, His sovereignty over all mankind, over the divers and strange motions of the heart of man. Admirable is it to govern those, both in respect of their multitude and irregularity. Consider we what millions of men dwell at once upon the face of the earth, and again, what troops of several imaginations will pass through the fancy of any one man, within the compass of one day; it is much to keep eye upon them, and to behold them all at once, but far more to command and controul them all. Yet, if they were all loyal and willingly obedient, were they tractable and easily curbed, it were more easy for us to conceive how they might be governed. But to bound and overrule the unruly hearts of men, the most of whom continually are either plotting or acting rebellion against their Lord, to make them all concur and meet at last in one end, cannot be done but by a power and a wisdom that are both infinite. That God whose name we often mention, but seldom think on His excellency, is alone the absolute monarch of men's hearts, and the ruler of all their motions. He hath them limited while they seem most free, and works His own glory out of their attempts, while they strive most to dishonour Him. *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*

This Psalm is made up of two different sorts of thoughts; the one arising out of *particular experience*, and the other out of a *general doctrine*. Those drawn from *experience*, are set down in the verses preceding the text; and in it, with those that follow, is contained the *doctrine*, with a *duty* annexed to it, which two are faith's main supporters. Past experiences verify the doctrine, and the generality of the doctrine serves to explain the particular experiences to all wise observers. There is not a treasure of the *merits* of saints in the Church, as some dream, but there is a treasure of the precious *experiences* of the saints, which every believer hath right to make use of; and these we should be versed in, that we may have them in readiness at hand, in time of need, and know how to use them, to draw both comfort from them to ourselves, and arguments to use with God.

The words contain clearly two propositions, both of them concerning the *wrath of man:* the former hath the event of it, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee:* the latter, the limitation of it, *The remainder of wrath Thou wilt restrain.*

That the virtues and graces of men do praise the Lord, all men easily understand, for they flow from Him: His image and superscription is upon them, and therefore no wonder if He has from them a tribute of glory. Who knows not that faith praises Him? *Abraham believed and gave glory to God.* Rom. iv. 20. Good works, the fruits of faith, praise Him too. *Herein is my Father glorified*, says our Saviour, *that ye bear much fruit.* John xv. 8. But that the inordinate wrath of man should praise Him, may seem somewhat strange. Were it God's own wrath, (since wrath is attributed to Him in Scripture,) that might praise Him, for it is always most just. Or were it a due and moderate anger of man, upon just cause, that were fit for praising Him too, in despite of the Stoics. But that *wicked* and *dis-*

ordered wrath (which is undoubtedly here meant,) that the *wrath of men*, which is both uncomely and dishonourable for themselves, though they think otherwise, that even such a wrath should honour God and praise Him, argues well both that He hath good right to praises, when every thing, even things that seem contrary to His nature as well as to His law, do pay them to Him; and that he hath great power and wisdom, who obtains what is due to Him even from those persons and things which of themselves are most unwilling and unfit to pay it. This is the excellent skill of His wisdom, to draw that which shall go into the making up of the precious composition of His praise, out of this *poison:* for so the word here used for *wrathful heat*, doth sometimes signify. And this wrath often proves so, a deadly poison both to those it is incensed against, and to the very breast that breeds it, and wherein it is kindled.

But for the clearer understanding of this, I conceive it will be requisite to consider more distinctly, first, what this *wrath of man* is; secondly, how it can *praise God;* and lastly, the *infallibility* of this event, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*

I. In the cxlviiith Psalm, where David summons the creatures to meet in that song of praise, to keep that full concert, he calls not only the heavens and the inhabitants of it, angels and lights, but those of the lower world to bear their part in it; and not only men, beasts, cattle, creeping things, and the flying fowl, but those creatures which do most resemble this wrath here spoken of, fire, stormy tempest, and dragons, *&c.* The tenor of this Psalm doth show, that by the *wrath of man* is to be understood the undue rage of evil and ungodly men against those whom God owns for His people. The word here used, signifies a *hot* or *inflaming* wrath; and indeed such is the feverish, distempered anger of the Church's enemies. And as too much heat is an enemy to solid reason, this hot wrath of theirs makes them incapable of wise deliberation in themselves, and inflexible to the good advice of others. It is true, they take counsel how to execute their wrath, as we shall hear anon, but they take no counsel that may cool it. Anger, described by its material cause, is called a boiling of the blood about the heart; but this ariseth from the apprehension of something offensive, kindling a desire of revenge. Now it is a wonder what the powers of the world find in Christ and his harmless flock, that can incense them. St. James says of the tongue, that *it is set on fire of hell.* The same is the origin of this wrath. *Why do the heathen rage?* saith the Psalmist, Psal. ii. 1. That is, not only to what purpose, intimating that it is a fruitless rage, and void of success, in regard of God's power, but *Why*, that is, *upon what occasion*, checking the rage as groundless and without cause, in regard of Christ and his Church's innocency. The cause is only within themselves, to wit, that unhappy antipathy of the serpent's seed against the seed of the woman. Thus, this *wrath of man* is, the causeless, malicious enmity of the wicked against the Church of God. And under the name of this passion I take to be here comprised likewise, all the attendants of it, all their crafty complotments and devices for the acting of their wrath. As there is mention of the nations' rage against Christ, in the second Psalm, so, likewise, of the consultations of those who are of

quality fit for it: *The rulers take counsel together.* Further, this wrath is not barely their inward fire, but the vent of it, when it flames into cruel and outrageous practices, including likewise all the instruments they make use of. And of all these it is true, that God shall gain glory by them. *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*

The *wrath of man*, says the Apostle, *accomplisheth not the righteousness of God.* Jam. i. 20. How then can it accomplish His praises? And this is the IInd thing propounded.

Are grapes gathered of thorns, or figs of thistles? Surely not. Therefore I called this praise, not the fruit or proper effect of man's wrath, but the event or consequent of it, by the efficacy of Divine providence. *The wrath of man shall praise Thee.* That is, the use which Thou wilt make of it, shall tend to Thy praise. Thou wilt produce such effects from it, both in the Church and upon Thine enemies, when thou sufferest Thy wrath to break forth, as shall furnish more matter of Thy praises than if Thou hadst altogether restrained it. To instance this in some few particulars:—

It is the fury of the Church's enemies, that has made known to the world the invincible *courage and patience of the saints.* Those ages which have been most monstrous in persecution, have most of all graced Christianity. Had there been no persecuting emperors, who would have heard of those primitive martyrs who triumphed over the cruelty of their torments? Were there no persecution, or peril, nor sword, against believers, we should not have heard the Apostle say, immediately after the mention of those, *In all these we are more than conquerors.* They could not have been so much as *conquerors*, had there been no *conflict.*

Again, as the wrath of man praises God in the invincible patience of the saints, so, likewise, in the *immoveable stability of the Church.* Is it not wonderful how so small and weak a company as the Church hath often been reduced to, yea, hath always been in respect of the world, could escape the mouths of so many lions, so many enraged enemies that were ready to devour it? And that we may see that this tends solely to the praise of her great Protector, look to the Church's song penned by the royal prophet; it is the cxxivth Psalm: *If it had not been the Lord that was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick.* The great monarchies and kingdoms of the world, which have risen with so much splendour, have had their periods and been buried in the dust. That golden-headed and silver-bodied image degenerated into worse metal as it went lower, and the brittle feet was the cause of the fall and breaking of all the rest. But the kingdom of Jesus Christ, though despicable in the world, and exposed to the wrath of the world in all ages, stands firm and cannot be removed. There is a common emblem of the winds blowing from all quarters, and upon the globe of the earth, being in the middle of them, is written *Immobilis.* This fitly resembles the Church. Why, it seems to be the sport of all the winds, but is indeed so established, that all of them, yea, *the very gates of hell cannot prevail against it.* Now, the more the Church's enemies labour and moil themselves to undo her, the more do their weakness and the power of her Lord appear; so that thus *the wrath of man doth praise Him.*

When was the Church free from the world's wrath? To say nothing of the Church of the Jews, did not those wicked emperors of Rome think to have made the Christian Church short-lived, to have drowned her newly born, in floods of her own blood? And in latter ages, who knows not the cruelties that have been practised by the Turk in the East, and the proud prelate of Rome in the West? By which she hath sometimes been brought to so obscure and low a point, that if you can follow her in history, it is by the track of her blood; and if you would see her, it is by the light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burnt. Yet hath she still come through and survived all that wrath, and still shall survive, till she be made perfectly triumphant.

Further: men's wrath tends to God's praise in this, that God, giving way to it, doth so manage it by His sublime providence, that it often directly crosses their own ends, and conduces manifestly to His. Pharaoh thought that his dealing more cruelly with the Jews in their tasks and burdens, was wisdom: *Let us work wisely*, says he. But whereas their ordinary servility was become familiar to them, and they were tamed to it, that same accession of new tyranny did prepare and dispose the Israelites for a desire of departure, and their departure made way for Pharaoh's destruction. Undigestible insolency and rage, hastening to be great, makes kingdoms cast them off, which would have been far longer troubled with their wickedness, had it been more moderate. Surely, then, the wrath of man commends the *wisdom* of God, when He makes him by that contrive and afford the means of his own downfall. *The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down*, says Bildad. Job xviii. 7. And that is a sad fall: as that eagle that was shot with an arrow trimmed with her own feathers.

But to close this point. It is out of all question, that the deserved punishment of man's unjust wrath, doth always glorify the justice of God; and the more He gives way to their wrath, the more notable shall be both their punishment and the justice of it. And though God seems neglective of His people and of His praise, while man's wrath prevails, yet the truth is, He never comes too late to vindicate His care of both; and when he defers longest, the enemy pays dear interest for the time of forbearance. In his eternal decree, He resolved to permit the course of man's wrath for His own glory, and when the period which he hath fixed is come, He stops man's wrath, and gives course unto the justice of His own. Nor is there, then, any possibility of escaping. He will right Himself, and be known by executing judgment. *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*

And that is the IIIrd thing propounded, the *infallibility of the event.*

The Author of nature governs all His creatures, each in a suitable way to the nature He hath given them. He maintains, in some things, a *natural necessity* of working, *contingency* in others, and in others, *liberty;* but all of them are subject to this *necessity* of effecting inevitably His eternal purposes. And this necessity is no way repugnant to the due liberty of man's will. Some entertain and maintain the truth; some plot, others act and execute, against it; some please themselves with a wise neutrality, and will appear so indifferent that

it would seem they might be accepted of all sides for judges of controversies. And all these find no less liberty to wind and turn themselves whither they please, than if no higher hand had the winding of them. Yet shall not only the *zeal* of the godly, but even the *wrath* of the enemy, and the *cold discretion* of the neutral, *all* tend to His praise whose supreme will will have a secret, but a sure and infallible sway in all their actions. Whilst some passengers sit, some walk one way, some another, some have their faces towards their journey's end, some their back turned upon it, this wise Pilot does most skilfully guide the ship to arrive with them all at His own glory. Happy they who propound and intend His glory as He Himself does, for in them shall the riches of His mercy be glorified! They who oppose Him, lose this happiness, but he is sure not to lose His glory for all that, to wit, the glory of His justice. His right hand shall find out all His enemies. *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*

The consideration of this truth, thus in some measure unfolded, may serve to justify the truly wise dispensation of God against our imaginary wisdom. Were the matter referred to our modelling, we should assign the Church constant peace and prosperity for her portion, and not consent that the least air of trouble should come near her; we would have no enemies to molest her, nor stir against her, or if they did stir, we would have them to be presently repressed; and these, in our judgment, would be the fairest and most glorious tokens of *His* love and power whose spouse she is. But this carnal wisdom is *enmity against God*, and is opposed to the glory of God, which rises so often out of the wrath of His enemies. Had God caused Pharaoh to yield at the very first, to the release of His people, where had been the fame of those miraculous judgments in Egypt, and those mercies on the Israelites, the one setting out and illustrating the other? Where had been that name and honour which God says He would gain to Himself, and which he did gain out of Pharaoh's final destruction, making that stony-hearted king and his troops *sink like a stone in the waters*, as Moses sings? Observe his proud boastings immediately foregoing his ruin: *I will pursue*, says he, *I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied on them: I will draw my sword, and my hand shall destroy them.* Soon after, the sea quenches all this heat. Commonly, big threatenings are unhappy presages of very ill success. That historian [Herodotus] says well of God, *Deus neminem alium, quam seipsum, sinit de se magnifice sentire:—God suffers no other to think highly of himself, than Himself alone.* And indeed, as He abhors these boastings, so He delights in the abasing of the lofty heart whence they flow, and it is His prerogative to gain praise to Himself out of their wrath. *Hast thou an arm like God?* says the Lord to Job, then, *look upon the proud and bring them low.* Job xl. 9, 12. When Sennacherib came up against Jerusalem, his blasphemies and boastings were no less vast and monstrous than the number of his men and chariots. Good Hezekiah turned over the matter unto God, spreading the letter of blasphemies before Him, upon which God undertook the war, and assured Hezekiah that the Assyrian should not so much as shoot an arrow against the city, but return the same way he came. 2 Kings xix. 33. And the de-

liverance there promised and effected, is conceived to have been the occasion of penning this very Psalm. Surely, when an angel did in one night slay 185,000. in their camps, that wrath and those threats tended exceedingly to the praise of the God of Israel. The hook that he put in Sennacherib's nostrils, (as the history speaks,) to pull him back again, was more remarkable than the fetters would have been, if He had tied him at home, or hindered his march with his army.

Who is he then that will be impatient because of God's patience, and judge Him slack in judgment, while the rage of the wicked prevails awhile? Know, that He is more careful of His own glory than we can be, and the greater height man's wrath arises to, the more honour shall arise to Him out of it. Did not His omnipotency shine brighter in the flames of that furnace into which the three children were cast, than if the king's wrath had been at first cooled? Certainly, the more both it and the furnace had their heat augmented, the more was God glorified. *Who is that God*, saith he blasphemously and proudly, *that can deliver you out of my hands?* Dan. iii. 15. A question, indeed, highly dishonouring the Almighty, but stay till the real answer come; and then, not only shall that wrath praise Him, but that very same tongue, though inured to blasphemy, shall be taught to bear a main part in the confession of those praises. Let that apostate emperor [Julian] go taunting the Head and tormenting the members, of that mystical body, his closing with *Ἐνίκησας Γαλιλαῖε, Thou hast overcome, O Galilean*, (meaning Christ,) shall help to verify that, whether its course be shorter or longer, man's wrath ends always in God's praise. In like manner, the closing of the lions' mouth, spake louder to His praise who stopped them, than if He had stopped Daniel's enemies in the beginning of their wicked design. So hot was their rage, that the king's favourable inclination to Daniel, (of which, in other cases, courtiers used to be so devout observers,) yea, his contesting and pleading for him, did profit him nothing, but they hurried their king to the execution of their unjust malice, though themselves were convinced that nothing could be found against him, but only concerning *the law of his God*. Dan. vi. 5. It is said, ver. 14, that king Darius *set his heart on Daniel to deliver him, and he laboured to do it till the going down of the sun*, and then those counsellors and counsels of darkness overcame him. But upon this black night of their prevailing wrath, followed immediately a bright morning of praises to Daniel's God, when the lions that were so quiet company all night to Daniel, made so quick a breakfast of those accursed courtiers who had maliciously accused him. *Even so let thine enemies perish, O Lord, and let those that love Thee, be as the sun when he goes forth in his might!*

The other proposition concerns the limiting of this wrath; *The remainder of wrath Thou wilt restrain.*

To take no notice, for the present, of divers other readings of these words, the sense of them, as they are here very well rendered, may be briefly this; that whereas the wrath of man to which God gives way, shall praise Him, the rest shall be *curbed* and *bound up*, as the word is; no more of it shall break forth than shall contribute to His glory. Here should be considered divers ways and means by which God useth to stop the heady course of man's wrath, and hinder its proceed-

ing any further; but only, for the present, let us take out of it this lesson, That the most compendious way to be safe from the violence of men, is to be on terms of friendship with God.

It is not an incomparable privilege, to be in the favour and under the protection of ONE, whose power is so transcendent that no enemy can so much as stir without His leave? Be persuaded then, Christians, in these dangers that are now so near us, every one to draw near to Him. Remove what may provoke Him. Let no reigning sin be found either in your cities or in your villages, for He is a holy God. Is it a time to multiply provocations now, or is it not rather high time to be humbled for the former? What shameless impiety is it, to be now licentious or intemperate, to be proud, to oppress or extort, to profane God's day, and blaspheme His name! All these sins, and many others, abound amongst us, and that avowedly. Without abundance of repentance for these, we shall smart, and the wrath of our enemies, though unjust in them, shall praise God in our just punishment; though, doubtless, he will own His Church, and be praised likewise in the final punishment of their wrath who rise against it. There is a remarkable expression in the ninety-ninth Psalm, of God's dealing with His people: *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions.* A good cause and a covenant with God, will not shelter an impenitent people from sharper correction. It is a sad word God speaks by His prophet to His own people: *I myself will fight against you.* Jer. xxi. 5. A dreadful enemy! and none, indeed, are truly dreadful but He. Oh! prevent His anger, and you are safe enough. If perverse sinners will not hear, yet, let those who are indeed Christians, mourn in secret, not only for their own sins, but let them bestow some tears likewise upon the sins of others. Labour to appease the wrath of God, and He will either appease man's wrath, or, howsoever, will turn it jointly to our benefit and His own glory. Let the fear of the most high God, who hath no less power of the strongest of His enemies than over the meanest of His servants; let His fear, I say, possess all our hearts, and it will certainly expel that ignoble and base fear of the wrath of man. See how the Prophet opposes them, Isa. viii. 12. *Fear not their fears,* says he, *nor be afraid; but sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.* Fear not, yet fear. This holy fear begets the best courage: the breast that is most filled with it, abounds most in true magnanimity. Fear thus, that you may be confident, not in yourselves, though your policy and strength were great, *for cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,* but confident in that God who is too wise and vigilant to be surprised, too mighty to be foiled, and too rich to be out-spent in provision; who can suffer His enemy to come to the highest point of apparent advantage, without any inconvenience, yea, with more renown in His conquest. And so, a Christian who is made once sure of this, (as easily he may,) is little careful about the rest. His love to God prevailing over all his affections, makes him very indifferent what becomes of himself or his dearest friends, so God may be glorified! What though many fall in the quarrel, (which God avert!) yet, it is sufficient that truth in the end shall be victorious. Have not the saints

in all ages been content to convey pure religion to posterity, in streams of their own blood, not of others? Well, hold fast by this conclusion, that God can limit and bind up the most violent wrath of man, so that, though it swell, it will not break forth. The stiffest heart, as the current of the most impetuous rivers, is in His hand, to appoint its channels, and turn it as he pleaseth. Yea, it is He that hath shut up the very sea with bars and doors, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* Job xxxviii. 10, 11. To see the surges of a rough sea come in towards the shore, a man would think that they were hastening to swallow up the land; but they know their limits, and are beaten back into foam. *Though the waves thereof toss themselves,* as angry at their restraint, yet, the small sand is a check to the great sea, *yet can they not prevail: though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.* Jer. v. 22.

The sum is this: what God permits His Church's enemies to do, is for His own further glory; and reserving this, there is not any wrath of man so great, but He will either sweetly calm it, or strongly restrain it. To Him be praise and dominion for ever.

SERMON XII.

Psalm cxii. 7.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

All the special designs of men agree in this; they seek satisfaction and quietness of mind, that is, happiness. This, then, is the great question, Who is the happy man? It is here resolved, ver. 1: *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth in his commandments.*

The blessedness is unfolded, like a rich landscape, that we may view the well mixed colours, the story and tissue of it, through the whole *alphabet* in capital letters. And take all and set them together, it is a most full and complete blessedness, not a letter wanting to it *. Amongst the rest, that which we have in these words, is of a greater magnitude and brightness than many of the rest, *He shall not be afraid of evil things.*

Well may the Psalm begin with a *Hallelujah*, a note of praise to Him in whom this blessedness lies. Oh, what a wretched creature were man, if not provided with such a portion! Without which there is nothing but disappointment, and thence the racking torment and vexation of a disquieted mind, still pursuing somewhat that he never overtakes.

The first words are the inscription, *The blessedness of that man*, &c. So, the particulars follow; where outward blessings are so set, as that they look and lead higher, pointing at their end, the infinite goodness

* This Psalm, in the Hebrew, consists of twenty-two short verses, each of which begins with one of the letters of the alphabet in their order, till they are all ended. No one letter is here omitted, as is the case in the xxvth Psalm, where the same order is observed.

whence they flow, and whither they return and carry along with them this happy man.

And these promises of outward things are often evidently accomplished to the righteous, and their seed after them, and that, commonly, after they have been brought very low. But when it is otherwise with them, they lose nothing. It is good for *many*, yea, it is good for *all* the godly, that they should have less of these lower things, in order to raise their eye to look after higher,—the eye of *all*, both of those who are held somewhat short, and of those that have abundance in the world.

These temporal promises were more abounding, and more frequently fulfilled in their very kind, in the times of the Law; yet, still the right is constant, and all ages do give clear examples of the truth of this word. Where it is thus, it is a blessing created by its aspect to this promise, and so differs from the prosperity of ungodly men; and where it is otherwise with the righteous and their seed, it is no shift, but a most solid comfort, to turn their eyes to a higher compensation.

But, howsoever it go with them, this still holds, *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.* Notwithstanding the hardest news that can come to his ears, of any thing that concerns either himself, or his children, or the rest of God's children in his charge, in the world, *his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

First, let us take a view of the character of this blessed man. Who is it that is thus undaunted? *The man that feareth God.*

All the passions are but several ebbings and flowings of the soul, and their motions are the signs of its temper, which way it is carried; *that* is mainly to be remarked by the beating of its pulse. If our desires, and hopes, and fears, be in the things of this world, and the interests of flesh, this is their distemper and disorder, the soul is in a continual fever. But if they move Godwards, then is it composed and calm, in a good temper and healthful state, fearing and loving Him, desiring Him, and nothing but Him, waiting for Him, and trusting in Him. And when any one affection is right and in a due aspect to God, all the rest are so too; for they are radically one. And He is the life of that soul which is united to Him; and so, in Him, it moves in a peculiar spiritual manner, as all do naturally in the dependence of their natural life on Him who is the Fountain of life.

Thus we have here this *fear of God*, as often elsewhere, set out as the very substance of holiness and evidence of happiness. And that we may know there is nothing either base or grievous in this fear, we have joined with it, *delight* and *trust: That delighteth greatly in His commandments:* which is that badge of love to Him, to observe them, and that with delight, and with exceeding great delight. So then, this fear is not that which love casts out, but that which love brings in. This fear follows and flows from love. It is a fear to offend, whereof nothing is so tender as love, and that, in respect of the greatness of God, hath in it withal a humble reverence. There is in all love a kind of reverence, a cautious and respective wariness towards the party loved; but especially in this, where not only we stand in a lower relation, as children to our Father, but the goodness which draws our love doth infinitely transcend our measures and reach; therefore, there is

a *rejoicing with trembling*, and an awful love, a *fearing the Lord and His goodness*. Hos. iii. 5. This is both *fear* and *trust*. The heart touched by the Spirit of God, as the needle touched with the loadstone, looks straight and speedily to God, yet still *with trembling*, being filled with this holy fear.

That delighteth. Oh! this is not only to do them, but to do them with delight: there is somewhat within that is connatural and symbolical with them. Yea, this very law itself is writ within, not standing as a hard taskmaster over our head, but impressed within, as a sweet principle in our hearts, and working from thence naturally. This makes a soul find pleasure in the purging out of sensual pleasures, and ease in doing violence to corrupt self, even undoing it for God, having no will but His. The remainders of sin and self in our flesh, will be often rising up, but this predominant love dispels them. So, this fear works with delight.

And further, that we may know how serene and sweet a thing it is, it is here likewise joined with confidence, *trusting in the Lord;* a quickening confidence always accompanying it, and so, undoubtedly, it is a blessed thing. *Blessed is he that feareth*. *Fear* sounds rather quite contrary, hath an air of misery; but add, *whom? That feareth the Lord*. That touch turns it into gold. He that so fears, fears not: *He shall not be afraid*. All petty fears are swallowed up in this great fear, as a spirit inured with great things, is not stirred nor affected at all with small matters. And this great fear is as sweet and pleasing as those little fears are anxious and vexing. Secure of other things, he can say, If my God be pleased, no matter who is displeased. No matter who despise me, if He account me His. Though all forsake me, my dearest friends grow estranged, and look another way, if He reject me not, that is my only fear, and for that I am not perplexed; I know He will not. As they answered Alexander, when he sent to inquire what they most feared, thinking possibly they would have said, lest he should invade them, but their answer was, *We fear nothing but lest Heaven should fall upon us;* which they did not fear neither: so, a believer hath no fear but of the displeasure of Heaven, lest the anger of God should fall upon him; he fears *that;* that is, accounts *that* only terrible; but yet, he doth not fear, doth not apprehend it will fall upon him, he is better persuaded of the goodness of his God. So this *fear* is still joined with *trust*, as here, so often elsewhere. Psal. xxxiii. 18, xl. 3, and cxlvii. 11.

There is no turbulency in this fear; it is calm and sweet. Even that most terrible evil, that which this fear properly apprehends and flies, *sin*, yet, the fear of that goes not to a distraction. Though there is little strength, and many and great enemies, mighty *Anakims* of temptations from without, and corruptions within, and so, good reason for a holy, humble fear and self-distrust, yea, this should not beat us off: yet, it is most fit to put us on to trust in Him who is our strength. Courage! the day shall be ours. Though we may be often foiled and down, and sometimes almost at a hopeless point, yet, our *Head* is on high. He hath conquered for us, and shall conquer in us. Therefore, so fear as not to fear. *Why should I fear in the days of evil*, says the Psalmist, *when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?* Psal. xlix. 5.

(Which I take is some grievous affliction, and that with a visage of punishment of sin: guiltiness is to be read in it, yet does he not fear.) If I *trusted in wealth*, and *boasted myself in the multitude of riches*, then that being in hazard, I must fear: leaning on that, it failing, I might fall. But this is my confidence (ver. 15), *God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.* Wealth cannot, but He can. It *buys* not a man out from his hand, but He *buys*, from *the hand of the grave;* so the word is. For the visible heavens even in their fall, and the dissolution of nature, would not affright a believer, *Si fractus illabatur orbis*, &c.

Alas! most persons have dull or dim apprehensions and shallow impressions of God; therefore they have little either of this *fear* or of this *trust*. God is not in all their thoughts, but how to compass this or that design, and if they miss one, then how to compass another: they are cast from one wave upon another. And if at any time they attain their purpose, they find it but a wind, a handful of nothing, far from what they fancied it.

Oh, my brethren, my desire is, that the faces of your souls were but once turned about, that they were towards Him, looking to Him, continually fearing Him, delighting, trusting in Him, making Him your all. Can any thing so elevate and ennoble the spirit of a man, as to contemplate and converse with the pure, ever-blessed Spring and Father of Spirits? Beg that you may know Him, that He would reveal Himself to you; for otherwise, no teaching can make Him known. It is to light candles to seek the sun, to think to attain to this knowledge without His own revealing it. If He hide His face, who then may behold Him? Pray for this quickening knowledge, such a knowledge as will effectually work this happy *fear* and *trust*.

You who have attained any thing of it, desire and *follow on to know the Lord;* particularly, so that your hearts may repose on Him. So fear that you may not fear. He would have our spirits calm and quiet; for when they are in a hurry and confusion, they are then fit for nothing: all within makes a jarring, unpleasant noise, as of an instrument quite out of tune.

This fear of God is not, you see, a perplexing doubting and distrust of His love: on the contrary, it is a fixed resting and trust on His love.

Many who have some truth of grace, are, through weakness, filled with disquieting fears; but possibly, though they perceive it not, it may be in some, a point of wilfulness, a little latent, undiscerned affectation of scrupling and doubting, placing much of religion in it. True, where the soul is really solicitous about its interest in God, that argues some grace; but being vexingly anxious about it, argues that grace is low and weak. A spark there is, even discovered by that smoke; but the great smoke still continuing, and nothing seen but it, argues there is little fire, little faith, little love.

And this, as it is unpleasant to thyself, so is it to God, as smoke to the eyes. What if one should be always questioning with his friend, whether he loved him or not, and upon every little occasion were ready to think he doth not, how would this disrelish their society together, though truly loving each other! The far more excellent way, and more pleasing both to ourselves and to God, were to resolve on

humble trust, reverence, and confidence, being most afraid to offend, delighting to walk in His ways, loving Him and His will in all, and then, resting persuaded of His love, though He chastise us. And even though we offend Him, and see our offences in our chastisements, yet, He is good, *plenteous in redemption*, ready to forgive; therefore *let Israel trust and hope*. Psal. cxxx. 7. Let my soul roll itself on Him, and adventure there all its weight. He bears greater matters, upholding the frame of heaven and earth, and is not troubled nor burdened with it.

The heart of a man is not sufficient for self-support; therefore, naturally, it seeks out some other thing to lean and rest itself on. The unhappiness is, for the most part, that it seeks to things below itself; but these, being both so mean and so uncertain, cannot be a firm and certain stay to it. These things are not fixed themselves: how can they then fix the heart? Can a man have firm footing on a quagmire, or moving sands? Therefore, men are forced in these things, still to shift their seat, and seek about from one to another, still rolling and unsettled. The believer only hath this advantage; he hath a rest high enough and sure enough, out of the reach of all hazards. *His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

The basis of this happiness is, *He trusteth in the Lord.* So the *heart is fixed;* and so fixed, it *fears no ill tidings.*

This *trust* is grounded on the word of God, revealing the power and all-sufficiency of God, and withal His goodness, His offer of Himself to be the stay of souls, His commanding us to rest on Him. People wait on I know not what persuasions and assurances, but I know no other to build faith on, than the word of promise, the truth and faithfulness of God opened up, His wisdom, and power, and goodness, as the stay of all those who, renouncing all other props, will venture on it, and lay all upon Him. *He that believes, sets to his seal that God is true*, John iii. 33, and so, he is sealed for God; his portion and interest are secured. *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* Isa. vii. 9.

This is the way to have peace and assurance, which many look for first, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.* Isa. xxvi. 3. So here, the heart is fixed by *trusting*.

Seek, then, clearer apprehensions of the faithfulness and goodness of God, hearts more enlarged in the notion of free grace, and the absolute trust due to it; thus shall they be more established and fixed in all the rollings and changes of the world.

His heart is fixed, or *prepared*, ready-dressed and in arms for all services, resolved not to give back, able to meet all adventures, and stand its ground. God is unchangeable, and therefore faith is invincible. That sets the heart on Him, fastens it there on the rock of of eternity; then, let winds blow, and storms arise, it cares not.

This firm and close cleaving unto God hath in it of the affection which is inseparable from this trust, *love*, joined with *faith*, and so, a hatred of all ways and thoughts that alienate and estrange from God, that remove and unsettle the heart. The holiest, weariest heart is surely the most believing and fixed heart. If a believer will adventure on any way of sin, he shall find that it will unfix him, and shake his

confidence, more than ten thousand hazards and assaults from without. These are so far from moving, that they settle and fix the heart commonly more, causing it to cleave the closer and nearer unto God; but sinful liberty breeds disquiet, and disturbs all. Where sin is, there will be a storm: the wind within the bowels of the earth, makes the earthquake.

Would you be quiet, and have peace within in troublous times? keep near unto God, beware of any thing that may interpose betwixt you and your confidence. *It is good for me*, says the Psalmist, *to be near God*; not only to draw near, but to keep near, to cleave to Him, and dwell in Him: so the word imports. Oh, the sweet calm of such a soul amidst all storms! Thus, once, trusting and fixed, then no more fear: he is *not afraid of evil tidings*, not of any *ill-hearing*. Whatsoever sound is terrible in the ears of men, the noise of war, news of death, or even the sound of the trumpet in the last judgment, he hears all this undisquieted. Nothing is unexpected. Being once fixed on God, then the heart may put cases to itself, and suppose all things imaginable, the most terrible, and look for them; not trouble before trouble comes, with dark and dismal apprehensions, but satisfied in a quiet, unmoved expectation of the hardest things. Whatsoever it is, though particularly not thought on before, yet the heart is not afraid of the news of it, because it is *fixed, trusting on the Lord*. Nothing can shake that foundation, nor dissolve that union; therefore, no fear. Yea, this assurance stays the heart in all things, how strange and unforeseen soever to it. All are foreseen to my God on whom I trust, yea are forecontrived and ordered by Him. This is the impregnable fortress of a soul. All is at the disposal and command of my God; my Father rules all: what need I fear?

Every one trusts to somewhat. As for honour, and esteem, and popularity, they are airy, vain things; but riches seem a more solid work and fence, yet they are but a tower in conceit, not really. Prov. xviii. 11. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall is his own conceit.* But, (ver. 10,) *the name of the Lord is a strong tower*, indeed. This is the thing that all seek, some *fence* and *fixing*; here it is. We call you not to vexation and turmoil, but *from* it, and, as St. Paul said, *Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.* Ye blindly and fruitlessly seek after the *show*. The true aiming at this fixedness of mind will secure that, though they fall short, yet, by the way they will light on very pretty things that have some virtue in them, as they that seek the philosopher's stone. But the believer hath the *thing*, the secret itself of tranquillity and joy, and this turns all into gold, their iron chains into a crown of gold: *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

This is the blessed and safe estate of believers. Who can think they have a sad, heavy life? Oh! it is the only lightsome, sweet, cheerful condition in the world. The rest of men are poor, rolling, unstayed things, every report shaking them, as the leaves of trees are shaken with the wind; yea, lighter than so, as the chaff that the wind drives to and fro at its pleasure. Isa. vii. 2; Psal. i. 4. Would men but reflect and look in upon their own hearts, it is a wonder what vain,

childish things the most would find there, glad and sorry at things as light as the toys of children, at which they laugh and cry in a breath. How easily is the heart puffed up with a thing or a word that pleaseth us, bladder-like, swelled with a little air, and it shrinks again in discouragements and fear, upon the touch of a needle's point, which gives that air some vent.

What is the life of the greatest part but a continual tossing betwixt vain hopes and fears? All their days are spent in these. Oh! how vain a thing is a man even in his best estate, while he is nothing but himself,—while his heart is not united and fixed on God, and he is disquieted in vain. How small a thing will do it! He needs no other than his own heart; it may prove disquietment enough to itself: his thoughts are his tormentors.

I know, some men are, by a stronger understanding and by moral principles, somewhat raised above the vulgar, and speak big of a constancy of mind; but these are but flourishes, an acted bravery. Somewhat there may be that will hold out in some trials, but it will fall far short of this fixedness of faith. Troubles may so multiply, as to drive them at length from their posture, and may come on so thick, with such violent blows, as will smite them out of their artificial guard, disorder all their Seneca and Epictetus, and all their own calm thoughts and high resolves. The approach of death, though they make a good mien, and set the best face on it, or if not, yet, some kind of terror, may seize on their spirits, which they are not able to shift off. But the soul trusting on God, is prepared for all, not only for the calamities of war, pestilence, famine, poverty, or death, but, when in the saddest apprehensions of the soul, beyond hope, believes against hope; even in the darkest night, casts anchor in God, reposes on Him when he sees no light. Is. l. 10. *Yea, though He slay me*, says Job, *yet will I trust on Him*,—not merely, though I die, but, though *He* slay me: when I see His hand lifted up to destroy me, yet, from that same hand will I look for salvation.

My brethren, my desire is, to stir up in your hearts an ambition after this blessed estate of the godly who fear the Lord, and trust in Him, and so fear no other thing. The common revolutions and changes of the world, and those which in these late times we ourselves have seen, and the likelihood of more and greater coming on, seem dreadful to weak minds. But let these persuade us the more to prize and seek this fixed, unaffrighted station: there is no fixing but here.

Oh! that you would be persuaded to break off from the vile ways of sin, which debase the soul and fill it full of terrors, and to disengage them from the vanities of this world, to take up in God, to live in Him wholly, to cleave to and depend on Him, to esteem nothing beside Him! Excellent was the answer of that holy man to the Emperor, on his first essaying him with large proffers of honour and riches to draw him from Christ: *Offer these things* (says he) *to children, I regard them not.* Then after he had tried to terrify him with threatening: *Threaten* (says he) *your effeminate courtiers, I fear none of these things.*

Seek to have your hearts established on Him by the faith of eternal life, and then it will be ashamed to distrust Him in any other thing.

Yea, truly, you will not much regard, nor be careful for other things how they be. It will be all one, the better and the worse of this *moment;* the things of it, even the greatest, being both in themselves so little and worthless, and of so short continuance.

Well, choose you; but all reckoned and examined, I had rather be the poorest believer than the greatest king on earth. How small a commotion, small in its beginning, may prove the overturning of the greatest kingdom! But the believer is heir to a kingdom that cannot be shaken. The mightiest and most victorious prince, who hath not only lost nothing, but hath been gaining new conquests all his days, is stopped by a small distemper in the middle of his course; he returns to his dust, and then his vast designs fall to nothing. *In that very day his thoughts perish.* But the believer, in that very day, is sent to the possession of his crown: that is his coronation day; all *his* thoughts are accomplished.

How can you affright him? Bring him word, that his estate is ruined. *Yet, my inheritance is safe*, says he. "Your wife, or child, or dear friend, is dead." *Yet, my Father lives.* "You yourself must die." Well then, *I go home to my Father, and to my inheritance.*

For the public troubles of the Church, doubtless, it is both a pious and a generous temper, to be more deeply affected for these than for all our private ones; and to be alive to the common calamities of any people, but especially of God's own people, hath been the character of men near unto Him. Observe the pathetical strains of the prophet's bewailing, when they foretell the desolation even of foreign kingdoms, much more when foretelling that of the Lord's chosen people; they are still mindful of Sion, and mournful for her distresses. See Jer. ix. 1, and the whole book of Lamentations. So the Psalmist: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem*, &c. Psal. cxxxvii. 5. Pious spirits are always public-spirited, as even brave Heathens were for the commonwealth. So he, in that passage of Horace*: *Little regarding himself, but much solicitous for the public.* Yet even in this, with much compassion, there is a calm in a believer's mind. How these agree, none can tell but they who feel it. He finds amidst all hard news, yet still, *a fixed heart, trusting*, satisfied in this, that deliverance shall come in due time, (Psal. cii. 13.) and that in those judgments that are inflicted, man shall be humbled and God exalted, (Isa. ii. 11; v. 16.) and that in all tumults, and changes and subversions of states, still, His throne is fixed, and with that the believer's heart likewise. So Psal. xxix. 10: *The Lord sitteth upon the flood: yea, the Lord sitteth king for ever.* Or, *sat in the flood*, possibly referring to the general deluge; yet, then, God sat quiet, and still *sitteth king for ever.* He steered the ark, and still guides his Church through all. So Psalm xlvi., throughout that whole Psalm. In all commotions, the kingdom of Christ shall be spreading and growing, and the close of all shall be full victory on his side; and that is sufficient for the believer.

Of this, a singular example is in Job, who was not daunted with so many ill-hearings, but stood as an unmoved rock amidst the winds and waves: *Ille velut rupes immota manebat.*

* Invenit insomni volventem publica curâ
Fata virûm, casusque urbis, cunctisque timentem,
Securumque sui.

In this condition there is so much sweetness that, if known, a man might suspect himself to be rather selfishly taken with it, than to be purely loving God. Such joy in believing, or at least, such peace, such a serene calmness, is in no other thing in this world. Nothing either without or within a man is to be named with this trusting on His *goodness*, who is God, and on His *faithfulness*, who, giving His promise for thy warrant, commands thee to rely on Him. The holy soul still trusts under the darkest apprehensions. If it is suggested that thou art a reprobate, yet, will the soul say, I will see the utmost, and hang by the hold I have, till I feel myself really cast off, and will not willingly fall off. If I must be separated from Him, He shall do it Himself; He shall shake me off while I would cleave to Him. Yea, to the utmost, I will look for mercy, and will hope better: though I found Him shaking me off, yet will I think He will not do it. It is good to seek after all possible assurance, but not to fret at the want of it; for even without those assurances which some Christians hang too much upon, there is in simple trust and reliance on God, and in a desire to walk in His ways, such a fortress of peace, as all the assaults in the world are not able to make a breach in. And to this add that unspeakable delight in walking in His fear, joined with this trust. The noble ambition of pleasing Him, makes one careless of pleasing or displeasing all the world. Besides, the delight in His commandments, in so pure, so just a law, holiness, victory over lusts, and temperance, hath a sweetness in it that presently pays itself, because it is agreeable to His will.

It is the godly man alone, who, by this fixed consideration in God, looks the grim visage of death in the face with an unappalled mind, which damps all the joys, and defeats all the hopes of the most prosperous, proudest, and wisest worldlings. As Archimedes said, when shot, *Avocàsti ab optima demonstratione*, so it spoils all their figures and fine devices. *But to the righteous, there is hope in his death.* He goes through it without fear, without Caligula's *Quò vadis*. Though riches, honours, and all the glories of this world, are with a man, yet he fears; yea, he fears the more for these, because here they must end. But the good man looks death out of countenance, in the words of David, *Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil, for thou art with me.* Psal. xxiii. 4.

SERMON XIII.

Matt. xiii. 3.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold a sower went forth to sow.

The rich bounty of God hath furnished our natural life, not barely for strict necessity, but with great abundance: many kinds of beasts, and fowls, and fishes, and herbs, and fruits, has He provided for the use of man. Thus our spiritual life likewise is supported with a variety: the word, the food of it, hath not only all necessary truths once simply

set down, but a great variety of doctrine for our more abundant instruction and consolation. Amongst the rest, this way of similitudes hath a notable commixture of profit and delight.

Parables not unfolded and understood, are a veil (as here) to the multitude, and in that view, they are a great judgment; (as Isa. vi. 9, cited here;) but when cleared and made transparent, then they are a glass to behold Divine things in more commodiously and suitably to our way. All things are big with such resemblances, but they require the dexterous hand of an active spirit to bring them forth. This way, besides other advantages, is much graced and commended by our Saviour's frequent use of it.

That which is given here, is fitted to the occasion: multitudes were coming to hear him, and many were not a whit the better for it. He instructs us in this point, the great difference between the different hearts of men, so that the same word hath very different success in them.

In this parable we shall consider these three things: 1. The nature of the word itself. 2. The sameness and commonness of the dispensation. 3. The difference of the operation and production.

The word, the *seed*, hath in it a productive virtue to bring forth fruit according to its kind, that is, the fruit of a *new life;* not only a new habitude and fashion of life without, but a new nature, a new kind of life within, new thoughts, a new estimate of things, new delights and actions. When the word reveals God, His greatness and holiness, then it begets pious fear and reverence, and study of conformity to Him. When it reveals His goodness and mercy, it works love and confidence. When it holds up to our view Christ crucified, it crucifies the soul to the world, and the world to it. When it represents those rich things which are laid up for us, that blessed inheritance of the saints, then it makes all the lustre of this world vanish, shows how poor it is, weans and calls off the heart from them, raising it to those higher hopes, and sets it on the project of a crown. And so it is a seed of noble thoughts and of a suitable behaviour in a Christian, as in the exposition of this parable, it is called the *word of the kingdom; seed*, an *immortal seed*, as St. Peter calls it, 1 Pet. i. 23, springing up to no less than eternal life.

This teaches us, 1. Highly to esteem the great goodness of God to those places and times which have been most blessed with it. *He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them.* Psal. cxlvii. 19.

2. That the same dispensation is to be preached indifferently to all where it comes, as far as the sound can reach. And thus it was very much extended in the first promulgating of the gospel; *their sound went out through all the earth*, as the Apostle allusively applies that of the psalmist. Rom. x. 18.—Psal. xix. 4.

3. This teaches also ministers liberally to sow this seed at all times, according to that, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand*, &c., (Eccl. xi. 6.) praying earnestly to Him who is the Lord, not only of the harvest, but of the seed time, and of this *seed*, to make it fruitful. This is His peculiar work. So the Apostle

acknowledges, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.* 1 Cor. iii. 6.

4. Hence we also learn the success to be very different. This is most evident in men: while one is cast into the mould and fashion of the word, and so moulded and fashioned by it, another is no whit changed; while one heart is melting before it, another is still hardened under it.

So, then, this is not all, to have the word and to hear it, as if that would serve our turn and save us, as we commonly fancy, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we.* Multitudes under the continual sound of the word, yet remain lifeless and fruitless, and die in their sins. Therefore, we must inquire and examine strictly, what becomes of it, how it works, what it brings forth; and for this very end, this parable declares so many are fruitless. We need not press them, they are three to one here; yea, that were too narrow, the odds is far greater, for these are but the kinds of unfruitful grounds, and under each of these are comprised huge multitudes of individuals, so that there may be a hundred to one, and it is to be feared, that in many congregations, it is more than so.

Whence is then the difference? Not from the seed; that is the same to all. Not from the sower neither, for though these be divers, and of different abilities, yet it hangs little or nothing on that. Indeed, he is the fittest to preach, who is himself most like his message, and comes forth not only with a handful of this seed in his hand, but with store of it in his heart, the word *dwelling richly in him;* yet, howsoever, the seed he sows, being this word of life, depends not on his qualifications in any kind, either of common gifts, or special grace. People mistake this much, and it is a carnal conceit to hang on the advantages of the minister, or to eye that much. The sure way is, to look up to God, and to look into thine own heart. An unchanged, unsoftened heart, like an evil soil, disappoints the fruit. What though sown by a weak hand, yea, possibly a foul one, yet if received into a clean and honest heart, it will fructify much. There is in the world a needless and prejudicial distinguishing of men, out of which people will not come, for all we can say.

The first bad ground is a *highway.* Now we have a commentary here, whence we may not, and will not depart: it is authentic and full. It is those who hear the word and *understand it not.* Ver. 19. Gross, brutish spirits, who perceive not what is said, are as if they were not there, sit like blocks, one log of wood upon another; as he said, *Lapis super lapidem in theatro.* This is our brutish multitude. What pity is it to see so many, such as have not so much as a natural apprehension of spiritual truths! Their hearts are the *common road* of all passengers, of all kinds of foolish, brutish thoughts; seeking nothing but how to live, and yet they know not to what end, have no design; trivial, *highway* hearts, which all temptations pass through at their pleasure; *profane as Esau*, which some critics draw from a word signifying the *threshold*, the outer step that every foul foot treads on.

These retain nothing; there is no hazard of that; and yet, the enemy of souls, to make all sure, lest peradventure some word might take root unawares, some grain of this seed, is busy to pick it

away; to take them off from all reflection, all serious thoughts, or the remembrance of any thing spoken to them. And if any common word is remembered, yet it doth no good, for that is trodden down like the rest; though the most is picked up, because it lies on the road. So it is expressed, Mark iv. 4.

The second is *stony ground;* hard hearts, not softened and made penetrable to receive in deeply this ingrafted word with meekness, with humble yielding and submission to it; the *rocks.* Yet, in these, there is often some receiving of it, and a little slender moisture above them, which the warm air may make spring up a little: they *receive with joy,* have a little present delight in it, are moved and taken with the sermon, possibly even to the shedding of some tears; but the misery is, there is a want of depth of earth, it sinks not.

No wonder if there is some present delight in these. Therefore, the *word of the kingdom,* especially if skilfully and sensibly delivered by some more able speaker, pleases. Let it be but a fancy, yet it is a fine pleasant one; such love as induced the Son of God to die for sinners; such a rich purchase made as a kingdom; such glory and sweetness. Therefore the description of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi., suppose it to be but a dream, or one of the visions of the night, yet it is passing fine; it must needs please a mind that heeds what is said of it. There is a *natural* delight in spiritual things, and thus the word of the Prophet, as the Lord tells him, (Ezek. xxxiii. 32,) was as a minstrel's voice, a fine song so long as it lasted, but which dies out in the air. It may be, the relish and air of it will remain awhile in the imagination, but not long; even that wears out and is forgotten. So here, it is *heard with joy,* and some is *springing up* presently: they commend it, and, it may be, repeat some passages, yea, possibly desire to be like it, to have such and such graces as are recommended, and upon that think they have them, are presently good Christians in their own conceit. And to appearance, some change is wrought, and it appears to be all that it is; but it is not deep enough. They talk, possibly, too much, more than those whose hearts receive it more deeply: there it lies hid longer, and little is heard of it; others may think it is lost, and, possibly, themselves do not perceive that it is there; they are exercised and humbled at it, and find no good in their own hearts; yet, there it is hid; as David says, *Thy word have I hid in my heart.* And as seed in a manner dies in a silent, smothering way, yet, it is in order to the fructifying and the reviving of it, so it will spring up in time, and be *fruitful* in its season—*with patience,* as St. Luke hath it of the good ground; not so suddenly, but much more surely and solidly.

But the most are present mushroom Christians, soon ripe, soon rotten. The seed goes never deep: it springs up indeed, but any thing blasts and withers it. There is little root in some. If trials arise, either the heat of *persecution* without, or a *temptation* within, this sudden spring-seed can stand before neither.

Oh, rocky hearts! How shallow, shallow, are the impressions of Divine things upon you! Religion goes never further than the upper surface of your hearts. You have but few deep thoughts of God, and of Jesus Christ, and the things of the world to come; all are but slight and transient glances.

The third is, *thorny ground.* This relates to the cares, and pleasures, and all the interests of this life. See Mark iv. 1; and Luke viii. 5. All these together are the *thorns.* And these grow in hearts which do more deeply receive the seed, and send it forth, and in which it springs up more hopefully than in either of the other two, and yet they choke it. Oh, the pity!

Many are thus almost at Heaven; there is so much desire of renovation, and some endeavours after it, and yet, the thorns prevail. Miserable thorns, the base things of a perishing life, drawing away the strength of affections, sucking the sap of the soul! Our other seed and harvest, our corn and hay, our shops and ships, our tradings and bargains, our suits and pretensions for places and employments of gain or credit, husband or wife, and children, and house, and train, our feastings and entertainments, and other pleasures of sense, our civilities and compliments, and a world of those in all the world, are these *thorns,* and they overspread all: *The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.*

And for how long is all the advantage and delight of these? Alas! that so poor things should prejudice us against the rich and blessed increase of this Divine seed!

The last is, *good ground, a good and honest heart.* There is not much fineness here, not many questions and disputes, but honest simplicity, sweet sincerity, that is all; a humble, single desire to eye and to do the will of God, and this from love to Himself. This makes the soul abound in the *fruits* of holiness, receiving the word as the ground of it. Different degrees there are indeed, *some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold;* yet, the lowest are aiming at the highest, not resting satisfied, still growing more fruitful; if thirty last year, desiring to bring forth sixty this.

This is the great point, and we ought to examine it; for much is sown and little brought forth. Our God hath done much for us; (what more could be done?) yet, when grapes were expected, wild grapes are produced. What becomes of all? Who grow to be more spiritual, more humble and meek, more like Christ, more self-denying, fuller of love to God and one to another? Some, but alas! how few. All the land is sown, and that plentifully, with the good seed; but what comes for the most part? Cockle, and no grain. *Infelix lolium.*

We would do all other things to purpose, and not willingly lose our end: we would not trade and gain nothing, buy and sell, and live by the loss; we would not plough and sow, and reap nothing. How sensibly do we feel one ill year! And shall *this* alone be lost labour, which, well improved, were worth all the rest? Oh! how much more worth than all! Shall we do only the greatest business to the least purpose? Bethink yourselves, what do we here? Why come we here? If we still remain as proud and passionate, as self-willed as before, what will all great bargains, and good years, and full barns, avail within a while? That word, *Thou fool, this night shall they fetch away thy soul,* how terrible will it be!

We think we are wise in not losing our labour in other things; why, it is all lost, even where most is gained. What amounts it to, when cast up? *Vanity and vexation of spirit,* is the total sum. And in

all our projecting and bustling, what do we but *sow the wind*, and *reap the whirlwind*, sow *vanity*, and reap *vexation?*

This seed alone, being fruitful, makes rich and happy, springs up to *eternal life!* Oh! that we were wise, that we would at length learn to hear every sermon as on the utmost edge of time, at the very brink of eternity! For any thing we know for ourselves, of any of us it may be really so. However, it is wise and safe to do as if it were so. Will you be persuaded of this? It were a happy Sermon, if it could prevail for the more fruitful hearing of all the rest henceforward. We have lost too much of our little time; and thus, with the Apostle, *I beseech you, I beseech you, receive not the grace of God in vain.*

Now, that you may be fruitful, examine well your own hearts; pluck up, weed out, for there are still thorns. Some will grow, but he is the happiest man who hath the sharpest eye and the busiest hand, spying them out, and plucking them up. *Take heed how you hear;* think it not so easy a matter. *Plough up, and sow not among thorns.* Jer. iv. 3.

And above all, pray, pray before, after, and in hearing. Dart up desires to God. He is the Lord of the harvest, whose influence doth all. The difference of the soil makes indeed the difference of success: but the Lord hath the privilege of bettering the soil. He who framed the heart, changes it when and how he will. There is a curse on all grounds naturally, which fell on the earth for man's sake, but fell more on the ground of man's own heart within him: *Thorns and briers shalt thou bring forth.* Now it is He that denounceth that curse, who alone hath power to remove it. He is both the sovereign owner of the seed, and the changer of the soil; He turns a wilderness into Carmel by His Spirit; and no ground, no heart, can be good, till He change it.

And being changed, much care must be had still in manuring; for still that is in it, which will bring forth many weeds, is a mother to them, and but a step-mother to this seed. Therefore,

Consider it, if you think this concerns you. *He that hath an ear to hear*, as our Saviour closes, *let him hear.* The Lord apply your hearts to this work; and though discouragements should arise without, or within, and little present fruit appear, but corruption is rather stronger and greater, yet, watch and pray. Wait on; it shall be better. This fruit is to be brought forth *with patience*, as St. Luke hath it. And this *seed*, this *word*, the Lord calls by that very name, the very *word of His patience.* Keep it, hide it in thy heart, and in due time it shall spring up. And this patience shall be put to it but for a little while. The day of harvest is at hand, when all who have been in any measure fruitful in grace, shall be gathered into glory.

SERMON XIV.

2 Cor. vii. 1.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

It is a thing both of unspeakable sweetness and usefulness, for a Christian often to consider the excellency of that estate to which he is called. It cannot fail to put him upon very high resolutions, and carry him on in the Divine ambition of behaving daily more suitably to his high calling and hopes. Therefore, these are often set before Christians in the Scriptures, and are pressed here by the Apostle upon a particular occasion, the avoidance of near combinements with unbelievers. He mentions some choice promises which God makes to His own people, and speaks of their near relation to, and communion with, Himself; and upon these, he enlarges and raises the exhortation to the universal endeavour of all holiness, and that as aiming at the very top and highest degree of it.

In the words are, I. The thing to which he would persuade. II. The motive.

I. The thing is, *holiness* in its full extension and intention. *Purging ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,* and *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

The purging out of filthiness, and the perfecting of holiness, express those two parts of renewing grace, *mortification* and *vivification*, as usually they are distinguished. But I conceive they are not so truly different parts, as a different notion of the same thing, the decrease of sin and the increase of grace, being truly one thing, as are the dispelling of darkness and the augmenting of light. So here, the one is rendered as the necessary result, yea, as the equivalent of the other, as the same thing indeed: *purging from filthiness*, and, in so doing, *perfecting holiness; perfecting holiness*, and, in so doing, *purging from filthiness.* By *perfection* is meant a growing, progressive advance towards perfection.

The words, without straining, give us as it were the several dimensions of holiness. The *breadth—cleansing from all filthiness;* the *length*, parallel to man's composition, running all along through his soul and body,—from all *filthiness of the flesh and spirit;* the *height—perfecting holiness;* the *depth*, that which is the bottom whence it rises us,—a deep impress of the fear of God, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Let us cleanse ourselves.] It is the Lord who is the sanctifier of His people; He *purges away their dross and tin*, He *pours clean water*, according to His promises; yet, doth He call to us to cleanse ourselves. Even, *having such promises, let us cleanse ourselves.* He puts a new life into us, and causes us to act, and excites us to excite it and call it up into act in the progress of sanctification. Men are strangely inclined to a perverse construction of things. Tell them that we are to act and work, and to *give all diligence*, then they would fancy a

doing in their own strength, and be their own saviours. Again, tell them that God works all our works in us, and for us, then they would take the ease of doing nothing: if they cannot have the praise of doing all, they will sit still with folded hands, and use no diligence at all. But this is the corrupt logic of the flesh, its base sophistry. The Apostle reasons just contrary, Phil. ii. 12: *It is God that worketh in us, both to will and do;—therefore*, would a carnal heart say, we need not work, or at least, may work very carelessly. But *he* infers, *Therefore let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*, that is, in the more humble obedience to God, and dependence on Him; not obstructing the influence of His grace, and by sloth and negligence provoking Him to withdraw or abate it. Certainly, many in whom there is *truth* of grace, are kept low in the *growth* of it, by their own slothfulness, sitting still, and not bestirring themselves, and exercising the proper actions of that spiritual life by which it is entertained and advanced.

From all filthiness.] All kinds of sinful pollutions. Not as men commonly do, reform some things, and take to themselves dispensations in others, at least in some *one* peculiar sin, their *mistress*, their *Herodias*, or their *Delilah:* no parting with that; yea, they rather forego many other things, as a kind of composition for the retaining of it.

Of flesh and spirit.] The *whole* man must be purified and consecrated to God; not only refined from the gross outward acts of sin, but from the inward affection to it, and from the secret motions of it, that so the heart, *like a weaned child*, (Psal. cxxxi. 2,) go not after it, which when restrained from the outward commission of sin, it may do, and very often does; as the Israelites *lusted after the flesh pots*, their hearts remained in Egypt still, though their bodies were brought out. This, then, is to be done; affection to sin is to be purged out. That is, we are to cleanse the *ground;* not only to lop off the branches, but to dig about, and loosen and pluck up the root. Though still fibres of it will stick, yet we ought still to be finding them out, and plucking them up.

Further, this applies not only to the inner part of all sins, but to some sins that are almost or wholly inward, that hang not so much on the body, nor are acted by it; those *filthinesses of the spirit* which are less easily discerned than those of the flesh, and, as more hardly discerned, so, when discerned, more hardly purged out: *pride, self-love, unbelief, curiosity*, &c., which, though more retired and refined sins, yet are pollutions and defilements, yea, of the worst sort, as being more spiritual, *filthiness of the spirit*. Fleshly pollutions are things of which the devils are not capable in themselves, though they excite men to them, and so they are called unclean spirits. But the highest rank of sins, are those that are properly *spiritual wickednesses*. These in men are the chief strengths of Satan, the inner works of his forts, and *strong-holds*. 2 Cor. x. 4. Many who are not much tempted to the common gross sensualities, who have, possibly, though an inclination to them, yet, a kind of disdain of them, and through education, and morality, and strength of reason, with somewhat of natural conscience, are carried above them, yet, have many of those *heights* the

Apostle speaks of, those lofty *imaginations* that rise against God and *the obedience of Christ*, all which must be demolished.

Perfecting holiness.] Not content with low measures, with just so much as keeps from hell, but aspiring towards perfection; aiming high at self-victory, self-denial, and the love of God becoming purer and hotter, like a fire, growing, and flaming up, and consuming the earth. Though men fall short of their aim, yet, it is good to aim high: they shall shoot so much the higher, though not full so high as they aim. Thus we ought to be setting the state of perfection in our eye, resolving not to rest content below that, and to come as near it as we can, even before we come at it. *Not as though I had already attained*, says the Apostle, *but this one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press towards the mark.* Phil. iii. 11, 12. This is to act as one who hath such a hope, such a state in view, and is still advancing towards it.

In the fear of God.] There is no working but on firm ground; there are no solid endeavours in holiness where it is not founded in a deeply-felt reverence of God, a desire to please Him and to be like Him, which springs from love. This, most men are either wholly strangers to, or are but slight and shallow in it, and therefore make so little true progress in holiness.

II. Then there is the motive. *Having these promises.* Being called to so fair an estate, so excellent a condition, to be the people, yea, the sons and daughters of God, therefore they are called to the *coming forth* from *Babel*, and the separating themselves from sin and purging it out. Holiness is His image in His children: the more there is of it, the more suitable are they to that blessed relation and dignity, and the firmer are their hopes of the inheritance of glory.

Consider sin as a filthiness: hate it. Oh, how ugly and vile is lust, how deformed is swelling pride! And all sin is an aversion from God, a casting of the noble soul into the mire, the defacing of all its beauty. Turning to present things, it pollutes itself with them: he who is *clad in scarlet, embraces the dunghill*, as Jeremiah in another sense laments.

The purity of things is, an *unmixture* and *simplicity* corresponding with their own being; and such is the purity of the soul when elevated above the earth and sense, and united unto God, contemplating Him, and delighting in Him. All inordinate bent to the creatures, or to itself, (which is the first and main disorder,) doth defile and debase it. And the more it is sublimed and freed from itself, the purer and more Heavenly it grows, and partakes the more of God, and resembles Him the more.

This, then, is to be our main study; first, to search out our iniquities, the particular defilements of our nature; not only gross filthiness, drunkenness, lasciviousness, &c., but our love of this earth, or of *air*, our vanity of mind, our self-will and self-seeking. Most persons, even most Christians, are short-sighted in respect to their own secret evils, the *filthiness of the spirit* especially, and use little diligence in this inquiry. They do not seek light from God, to go in before Him, and to lead them into themselves, as the Prophet had in the discovery of

idolatries at Jerusalem. Oh! that we could once see what heaps of abominations lie hid in us, one behind another!

Then, having searched out, we must follow on to purge out: we are not to pass over, nor to spare any, but to delight most in casting out the best beloved sin, the choicest idol, that hath had most of our service and sacrifices, to make room for Jesus Christ.

And never cease in this work, for still there is need of more purifying. One day's work in this, disposes for and engages to a further, to the next; for, as sin is purged out, light comes in, and more clear discoveries are made of remaining pollutions. So, then, still there must be progress, less of the world, and more of God in the heart every day. Oh! this is a sweet course of life. What gain, what preferment is to be compared to it?

And in this, it is good to have our ambition growing; the higher we rise, to aspire still the higher, looking further than before, even towards the perfection of holiness. It is not much we can here attain to, but surely, it is commonly far less than we might; we improve not our condition and advantages as we might do. The world are busy driving forwards their designs. Men of spirit are animated both by better and by worse success: if any thing miscarry, it sets them on the more eagerly to make it up, in the right management of some other design: and when they prosper in one thing, that enables and encourages them to attempt further. Shall all other things seem worth our pains? Are only grace and glory so cheap in our account, that the least diligence of all goes that way? Oh, strange delusion!

Now, our cleansing is to be managed by all holy means: the *word* and *sacrament* more wisely and spiritually used than commonly they are with us; and *private prayer*, which purifies and elevates the soul, takes it up into the mount, and makes it shine; and particularly, supplicating for the Spirit of holiness and for victory over sin, is not in vain;—the soul obtains its desires of God, becoming that which it is fixedly set upon; *holy resolution*;—Christians are much wanting in this, are faint and loose in their purposes;—the *consideration of Divine truths*, the mysteries of the kingdom, the hope of Christians, yea, rich and great promises, that is particularly here the motive:—these are all the means, and holy means they are, as their end is, the perfection of holiness.

Having these promises.] Now consider whether it is better to be the slaves of Satan, or the sons of God. Measure delight in God, with the low, base pleasures of sense. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God:* these gradually go on together, and are perfected together.

Why, then, is there such an invincible love of sin in the hearts of men? At least, why so little love of holiness, and endeavour after it, so mean thoughts of it, as a thing either indecent or unpleasant, when it is the only noble and the only delightful thing in the world? The soul by other things is drawn below itself, but by holiness it is raised above itself, and made Divine. The pleasures of sin are for a season: they are the pleasures of a moment exchanged for those of eternity. But even in the mean time, in this season, the holy soul is fed with communion with God, one hour of which is of more worth than the longest life of the highest of the world's delights.

SERMON XV.

Psalm cxix. 32.

I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.

To desire ease and happiness, under a general representation of it, is a thing of more easy and general persuasion; there is somewhat in nature to help the argument. But to find beauty in, and be taken with, the very *way* of holiness that leads to it, is more rare, and depends on a higher principle. *Self-love* inclines a man to desire the *rest of love*, but to love and desire *the labour of love*, is love of a higher and purer strain. To delight and be cheerful in obedience, argues much love as the spring of it. That is the thing the holy Psalmist doth so plentifully express in this Psalm, and he is still desiring more of that sweet and lively affection that might make him yet more abundant in action. Thus here, *I will run*, &c. He presents his desire and his purpose together, *q. d.*, The more of this grace Thou bestowest on me, the more service shall I be able to do Thee.

This is the top of his ambition, while others are seeking to enlarge their barns, their lands or estates, or their titles; and kings to enlarge their territories or authority, to encroach on neighbouring kingdoms, or be more absolute in their own; instead of all such *enlargements*, this is David's great desire, *an enlarged heart to run the way of God's commandments*.

And these *other* (how big soever they sound) are poor narrow desires: this *one* is larger and higher than them all, and gives evidence of a heart already large. But as it is miserable in *those* desires, so it is happy in *this*, that *much* would still have *more*.

Let others seek more *money*, or more *honour*, Oh! the blessed choice of that soul that is still seeking more *love to God*, more affection, and more ability to do Him service; that counts all days and hours for lost, which are not employed to this improvement; that hears the word in public, and reads it in private for this purpose, to kindle this love, or to blow the spark, if any there be already in the heart, to raise it to a clear flame, and from a little flame to make it burn yet hotter and purer, and rise higher: but, above all means, is often presenting *this* in prayer to Him on whose influence all depends, in whose hand our hearts are, much more than in our own. It follows Him with this desire, and works on Him by His own interest. Though there can be really no accession of gain to Him by our services, yet, He is pleased so to account with us as if they were. Therefore we may urge this: Lord, give more, and receive more: *I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

We have here in the words, a required *disposition*, and a suitable *resolution*. The *disposition* relates to the *resolution*, as the means of fulfilling it; and the *resolution* relates to the *disposition*, both as the end of desiring it, and as the motive of obtaining it. The *resolution* occurs first in the words,

I will run, &c.] The *way* resolved on, is, that of *God's command-*

ments; not the road of the polluted world, not the crooked ways of his own heart, but the high-way, the royal way, the straight way of the kingdom, and that in the notion of subjection and obedience, *the way of Thy commandments.* This, Man naturally struggles against, and repines at. To be limited and bounded by a law, is a restraint; and vain man could possibly find in his heart to do many of the same things that are commanded, but he would not be tied, would have his liberty, and do it of his own choice. This is the *enmity of the carnal mind* against God, as the Apostle expresses it: *it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be;* it breaks these bonds, and casts away the cords of his authority. This is sin, the transgression of the law; and this made the first sin so great, though in a matter one would think small, the eating of the fruit of a tree: it was rebellion against the majesty of God, casting off his law and authority, and aspiring to an imagined self-deity. And this is still the treasonable pride, or independency, and wickedness of our nature, rising up against God who formed us of nothing.

And this is the power and substance of religion, the new impress of God upon the heart, obedience and resignment to Him. To be given up to Him as entirely His, to be moulded and ordered as He will, to be subject to His laws and appointments in all things, to have every action, and every word, under a rule and law, and the penalty to be so high, eternal death; all this to a carnal or haughty mind is hard. Not only every action and every word, but even every thought too, must be subject; the soul is not so much as thought-free. *Every thought is brought into captivity,* as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. x. 5; and so the licentious mind accounts it. Not only the affections and desires, but the very reasonings and *imaginations* are brought under this law.

Now, to yield this as reasonable and due to God; to own His sovereignty, and to acknowledge the Law to be *holy, just, and good;* to approve, yea, to love it, even where it most contradicts and controls our own corrupt will and the law of sin in our flesh; this is true spiritual obedience;—to study and inquire after the will of God in all our ways, what will please Him, and having found it, to follow that which is here called the *way of His commandments;* to make this *our* way, and our business in the world, and all other things but accessories and by-works, even those lawful things that may be taken in, and used as helps in our way: as the disciples passing through the corn, plucked the ears and did eat it passing, as a by-work, but their business was to follow their Master. And whatsoever would hinder us in this way, must be watched and guarded against. To effect that, we must either remove and thrust it aside, or if we cannot do that, yet we must go over it, and trample it under foot, were it the thing or the person that is dearest to us in the world. Till the heart be brought to this state and purpose, it is either wholly void of, or very low and weak in the truth of, religion.

We place religion much in our accustomed performances, in coming to church, hearing and repeating of sermons, and praying at home, keeping a road of such and such duties. The *way of God's commandments* is more in *doing* than in *discourse.* In many, religion

evaporates itself too much out by the tongue, while it appears too little in their *ways*. Oh! but this is the main: one act of charity, meekness, or humility, speaks more than a day's discourse. All the means we use in religion, are intended for a further end, which if they attain not, they are nothing. This end is to mortify and purify the heart, to mould it to the way of God's commandments in the whole track of our lives; in our private converse one with another, and our retired secret converse with ourselves, to have God still before us, and His law our rule, in all we do, that He may be our meditation day and night, and that His law may be our *counsellor*, as this Psalm hath it; to regulate all our designs and the works of our callings by it; to walk *soberly, and godly, and righteously, in this present world;* to curb and cross our own wills where they cross God's; to deny ourselves our own humour and pride, our passions and pleasures, to have all these subdued and brought under by the power of the law of love within us;—this, and nothing below this, is the end of religion. Alas! amongst multitudes who are called Christians, some there may be who speak and appear like it, yet how few are there who make this their business, and aspire to this, *the way of God's commandments!*

His intended course in this way, the Psalmist expresses by *running*. It is good to be in this way even in the slowest motions. Love will *creep* where it cannot *go*. But if thou art so indeed, then thou wilt long for a swifter motion. If thou do but creep, be doing, creep on, yet desire to be enabled to go. If thou goest, but yet halting and lamely, desire to be strengthened to walk straight; and if thou walkest, let not that satisfy thee, desire to *run*. So here David did *walk* in this way but he earnestly wishes to mend his pace; he would willingly *run*, and for that end he desires an *enlarged heart*.

Some dispute and descant too much whether they go or not, and childishly tell their steps, and would know at every pace whether they advance or not, and how much they advance, and thus amuse themselves, and spend the time of doing and going, in questioning and doubting. Thus it is with many Christians. But it were a more wise and comfortable way, to be endeavouring onwards, and, if thou make little progress, at least to be desiring to make more; to be praying and walking, and praying that thou mayest walk faster, and that in the end thou mayest run; not to be satisfied with any thing attained, but yet, by that unsatisfiedness, not to be so dejected as to sit down, or stand still, but rather excited to go on. So it was with St. Paul, Philip. iii. 13. *Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward.* If any one thinks that he hath done well and run far, and will take a pause, the great Apostle is of another mind: *Not as if I had already attained.* Oh, no! far from that, he still sets forward, as if nothing were done: like a runner, not still looking back to see how much he hath run, but forward to what he is to run, *stretching forth* to that, inflamed with frequent looks at the mark and end. Some are retarded by looking on what is past, as not satisfied: they have done nothing, as they think, and so stand still discontented. But even in that way, it is not good to look too much to things behind: we must forget them rather, and press onwards.

Some, if they have gone on well, and possibly run for a while, yet,

if they fall, then they are ready, in a desperate malcontent, to lie still, and think all is lost; and in this peevish fretting at their falls, some men please themselves, and take it for repentance, whereas indeed it is not that, but rather pride and humour. Repentance is a more submissive, humble thing. But this is what troubles some men at their new falls, (especially if after a long time of even walking or running,) they think their project is now spoiled, their thoughts are broken off: they would have had somewhat to have rejoiced in, if they had still gone on to the end, but being disappointed of that, they think they had as good let alone, and give over. Oh! but the humble Christian is better taught: his falls teach him indeed to abhor himself; they discover his own weakness to him, and empty him of self-trust; but they do not dismay him to get up and go on, not boldly and carelessly forgetting his fall, but in the humble sense of it, walking the more warily, yet not the less swiftly; yea, the more swiftly too, making the more haste to regain the time lost by the fall. So then if you would run in this way, depend on the strength of God, and on His Spirit leading thee, that so thou mayest not fall. And yet if thou dost fall, arise, and, if thou art plunged in the mire, go to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and wash there; bemoan thyself before thy Lord; and if hurt and bleeding by thy fall, yet look to Him, desire Jesus to pity thee, and bind up and cure thy wound, washing off thy blood, and pouring in of his own.

However it is with thee, give not over, faint not, run on. And that thou mayest run the more easily and expeditely, make thyself as light as may be, *lay aside every weight.* Heb. x. 1, 2. Clog not thyself with unnecessary burdens of earth, and especially lay aside that which, of all things, weighs the heaviest, and cleaves the closest, *the sin that so easily besets us*, and is so hardly put off us, that folds so connaturally to us, and we therefore think will not hinder us much. And not only the sins that are more outward, but the inner, close-cleaving sins, the sin that most of all sits easily to us; not only our cloak, but our inner coat, away with that too, as our Saviour says in another case; and *run the race set before us*, our appointed stage, and that *with patience*, under all oppositions and discouragements from the world without, and from sin within. And to encourage thee in this, look to such a *cloud of witnesses*, that compasseth us about to further us, as troubles, temptations, and sin, do to hinder us. *They* encountered the like sufferings, and were encumbered with the like sins; and yet, they ran on, and got home. Alexander would have run in the *Olympic* games if he had had kings to run with: now, in this race, kings, and prophets, and righteous persons, run; yea, all are indeed a *kingly generation*, each one heir to a crown as the *prize* of this race.

And if these encourage thee but little, then *look* beyond them, above that cloud of witnesses, to the *sun*, the *Sun of Righteousness;* looking off from all things here, that would either entangle thee or discourage thee, taking thine eye off from them, and looking to Him who will powerfully draw thee and animate thee. *Look to Jesus*, not only as thy *forerunner* in this race, but also, as thy *undertaker* in it, *the author and finisher of our faith.* His attaining the end of the race, is the pledge of thy attaining, if thou follow him cheerfully on the same en-

courages that he looked to: *Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.*

When thou shalt enlarge my heart.] In all beings, the heart is the principle of motion, and according as it is more or less perfect in its kind, those motions which flow from it, are more or less vigorous. Therefore hath the Psalmist good reason, to the end his spiritual course may be the steadfaster and the faster, to desire that the principle of it, *the heart*, may be more enabled and disposed, which here he expresses by its being *enlarged*.

What this *enlargement of the heart* is, a man's own inward sense should easily explain to him. Surely it would, did men reflect on it, and were they acquainted with their own hearts; but the most are not. They would find the carnal natural heart, a narrow, contracted, hampered thing, bound with cords and chains of its own twisting and forging, and so incapable of *walking*, much less of *running*, in this way of God's commandments, till it be freed and enlarged.

The heart is taken generally in Scripture for the whole soul, the *understanding* and the *will*, in its several affections and motions; and the phrase being here of an *enlarged heart*, it seems very congruous to take it in the most enlarged sense.

It is said of Solomon, that he had a *large heart*, (the same word that is here,) *as the sand on the sea-shore*, 1 Kings iv. 29; that is, a vast comprehensive spirit, that could fathom much of nature, both its greater and lesser things. *He spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, to the hyssop on the wall, and of great beasts, and small creeping things.* Thus, I conceive, the *enlargement of the heart* compriseth the enlightening of the understanding. There arises a clearer light there, to discern spiritual things in a more spiritual manner; to see the vast difference betwixt the vain things the world goes after, and the true, solid delight that is in the *way of God's commandments;* to know the false blush of the pleasures of sin, and what deformity is under that painted mask, and not be allured by it; to have enlarged apprehensions of God. His excellency, and greatness, and goodness; how worthy he is to be obeyed and served. This is the great dignity and happiness of the soul: all other pretensions are low and poor, in respect of this. Here then is enlargement, to see the purity and beauty of His law, how just and reasonable, yea, how pleasant and amiable it is; that *His commandments are not grievous;* that they are beds of spices, the more we walk in them, still the more of their fragrant smell and sweetness we find.

And then, consequently, upon the larger and clearer knowledge of these things, the heart dilates itself in affection: the more it knows of God, still the more it loves Him, and the less it loves this present world. Love is the great *enlarger* of the heart, to all obedience. Then nothing is hard, yea, the harder things become the more delightful.

All love of other things doth pinch and contract the heart, for they are all narrower than itself. It is framed to that wideness in its first creation, capable of enjoying God, though not of a full comprehending of Him. Therefore, all other things gather it in, and straiten it

from its natural size; only the love of God stretches and dilates it. He is large enough for it, yea, it, in its fullest enlargement, is infinitely too narrow for Him. Do not all find it if they will ask themselves, that in all other loves and pursuits in this world, there is still somewhat that pinches? The soul is not at its full size, but, as a foot in a strait shoe, is somewhere bound and pained, and cannot go freely, much less run: though another who looks on, cannot tell where, yet, each one feels it. But when the soul is set free from these narrow things, and is raised to the love of God, then is it at ease and at large, and hath room enough; it is both *elevated* and *dilated*. And this word signifies a *high-raised* soul, and is sometimes taken for *proud* and *lofty;* but there is a *greatness* and *height* of spirit in the love of God and union with Him, that doth not vainly swell and lift it up, but with the deepest humility, joins the highest and truest magnanimity. It sets the soul above the snares that lie here below, in which most men creep and are entangled, in that *way of life*, which *is on high to the just*, as Solomon speaks.

Good reason hath David to join these together, and to desire the one as the spring and cause of the other; an *enlarged heart*, that he might *run the way of God's commandments*.

Sensible joys and consolations in God do encourage and enlarge the heart; but these are not so general to all, nor so constant to any. Love is the abounding, fixed spring of ready obedience, and will make the heart cheerful in serving God, even without those felt comforts, when He is pleased to deny or withdraw them.

In that course or race, are understood *constancy*, *activity*, and *alacrity;* and all these flow from the *enlargement of the heart*.

1. *Constancy*. A narrow, inthralled heart, fettered with the love of lower things, and cleaving to some particular sins, or but some one, and that in secret, may keep foot a while in the way of God's commandments, in some steps of them; but it must give up quickly, is not able to run on to the end of the goal. But a heart that hath laid aside every weight, and the most close-cleaving and besetting sin (as it is in that forecited place in the Epistle to the Hebrews), hath stripped itself of all that may falter or entangle it, it runs, and runs on, without fainting or wearying; it is at large, hath nothing that pains it in the race.

2. *Activity*. Not only holding on, but running, which is a swift, nimble race. It stands not bargaining and disputing, but once knowing God's mind, there is no more question or demur. *I made haste and delayed not*, as in this Psalm the word is, did not stay upon why and wherefore: he stood not to reason the matter, but ran on. And this love, enlarging the heart, makes it abundant in the work of the Lord, quick and active, despatching much in a little time.

3. *Alacrity*. All is done with cheerfulness, so, no other constraint is needful, where this overpowering, sweet constraint of love is. *I will run*, not be hauled and drawn as by force, but *skip* and *leap;* as the evangelic promise is, that the *lame shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert*. Isa. xxxv. 6. The Spouse desires her Beloved *to hasten as a roe and hind on the mountains of spices*, and she doth so, and each faithful soul runs towards him, to meet him in his way.

It is a sad heavy thing to do any thing as in obedience to God, while the heart is straitened, not enlarged towards Him by Divine love; but that once taking possession and enlarging the heart, that inward principle of obedience makes the outward obedience sweet; it is then a natural motion. Indeed the soul runs in the ways of God, as the sun in his course, which finds no difficulty, being naturally fitted and carried to that motion; he *goes forth as a bridegroom, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

This is the great point which our souls should be studious of, to attain more *evenness*, and nimbleness, and *cheerfulness*, in the ways of God; and for this end we ought to seek above all things this *enlarged heart.* It is the want of this makes us bog, and drive heavily, and run long upon little ground. Oh, my beloved, how shallow and narrow are our thoughts of God! Most even of those who are truly godly, yet, are led on by a kind of instinct, and carried they scarcely know how, to give some attendance on God's worship, and to the avoidance of gross sin, and go on in a blameless course. It is better thus, than to run to *excess of riot* and open wickedness, with the ungodly world. But, alas! this is but a dull, heavy, and languid motion, where the heart is not enlarged by the daily growing love of God. Few, few are acquainted with that delightful contemplation of God, which ventilates and raises this flame of love. Petty things bind and contract our spirits, so that they feel little joy in God, little ardent, active desire to do Him service, to crucify sin, to break and undo self-love within us, to root up our own wills to make room for His, that His alone may be ours, that we may have no will of our own, that our daily work may be to grow more like Him in the beauty of holiness. You think it a hard saying, to part with your carnal lusts and delights, and the common ways of the world, and to be tied to a strict, exact conversation all your days. But Oh! the reason of this is, because the heart is yet straitened and inthralled by the base love of these mean things, and that arises from the ignorance of things higher and better. One glance of God, a touch of His love, will free and enlarge the heart, so that it can deny all, and part with all, and make an entire renouncing of all, to follow *Him.* It sees enough in Him, and in Him alone, and therefore, can neither quietly rest on, nor earnestly desire any thing beside Him.

Oh! that you would apply your hearts to consider the excellency of this way of God's commandments! Our wretched hearts are prejudiced; they think it melancholy and sad. Oh! there is no way truly joyous but this. *They shall sing in the ways of the Lord*, says the Psalmist. Psal. cxxxviii. 5. Do not men, when their eyes are opened, see a beauty in meekness, and temperance, and humility, a present delightfulness and quietness in them? Whereas in pride and passion, and intemperance, there is nothing but vexation and disquiet. And then, consider the *end* of this way, and of this race in it, *rest and peace* for ever. It is the *way of peace*, both in its own nature, and in respect of its end. Did you believe that joy and glory which are set before you in this way, you would not any of you defer a day longer, but forthwith you would break from all that holds you back, and enter into this way, and run on cheerfully in it. The persuasion of those great

things *above*, would enlarge and greaten the heart, and make the greatest things *here* very little in your eyes.

But would you attain to this enlarged heart for this race, as you ought to apply your thoughts to these Divine things, and stretch them on the promises made in the world, so, above all, take David's course, seek this enlargement of heart from God's own hand. For it is here propounded and laid before God by way of request: See what is my desire, I would gladly serve Thee better, and advance more in *the way of Thy commandments;* now, this I cannot do till my heart be more enlarged, and that cannot be but by Thy hand. *When Thou shalt enlarge my heart.* Present this suit often: it is in His power to do it for thee. He can stretch and expand thy straitened heart, can hoist and spread the sails within thee, and then carry thee on swiftly; filling them, not with the vain air of man's applause, which readily runs a soul upon rocks and splits it, but with the sweet breathings and soft gales of His own Spirit, which carry it straight to the desired haven.

Findest thou sin cleaving to thee and clogging thee? Cry to Him: —Help, Lord! set me free from my narrow heart.—I strive but in vain without Thee; still it continues so.—I know little of Thee; my affections are dead and cold towards Thee.—Lord, I desire to love Thee, here is my heart; and lest it fly out, lay hold on it, and take Thine own way with it: though it should be in a painful way, yet, draw it forth, yea, draw it that it may run after Thee. All is His own working, and all His motive is His own free grace. Let who will fancy themselves masters of their own hearts, and think to enlarge them by the strength of their own stretches of speculation; they alone, they alone are in the sure and happy way of attaining it, who humbly sue and wait for this enlargement of heart from His hand who made it.

SERMON XVI.

Romans viii. 33, 34.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Other men may fancy and boast as they please, but there are none in the world but the godly alone, that are furnished with sufficiently strong supports and comforts against all possible hazards. And of these doth the Apostle treat most freely, sweetly, and plentifully, in this chapter. He secures believers in their Christ, touching these two great evils, *after condemnation*, and *present affliction*, that the one cannot befall them, and the other cannot hurt them.

For their immunity from the former, they have the clear word of the Gospel, and the seal of the Spirit; and that former privilege made sure, as the far greater, doth secure the other as the less.

They are freed from condemnation, and not only so, but entitled and ensured to a kingdom. And what hurt then can affliction do? Yea, it doth good; yea, not only it cannot rob them of their crown, but it carries them on towards it, is their highway to it: *If we suffer with*

Him, we shall also be glorified together. Yea, all things to the children of God do prove advantageous: severally taken in their present sense, they may seem evil, but taken jointly in their after issue, their working together is all for good. In their simple nature, possibly they are poison, yet, contempered and prepared, they shall prove medicinal. *All these things are against me,* said old Jacob, and yet he lived to see even all these were *for* him. The children of God are indeed so happy, that the harshest things in their way change their nature, and become sweet and profitable. This much is effected by their prayers, which have a divine incantation in them. They breathe forth the expressions of their love to God, by which they are characterized, ver. 28, *them that love God;* and *that* is put on their hearts, the *impression of His love to them,* to which they are here led by the Apostle, as to the spring-head of all. All their comforts and privileges flow thence, yea, all their love and their faith, appropriating those comforts and privileges. Yea, the very treasury of all together, Jesus Christ himself, is the free gift of this free love. He, as the greatest, ascertains all things besides as unspeakably less.

These two are such mighty arguments, that no difficulty nor grief can stand before them. The *love of God,* He is with us; who then can be against us? All the world it may be, but that all is nothing. Once it was nothing: it was that God who is our God, who loves us and is for us, who made it something; and if He will, it may again be nothing. And as it is at its best, it is nothing, being compared with *another gift* which he hath bestowed on us; and having bestowed that, surely, if there be any thing in this world can do us any good, we shall not want it. *He that spared not his own Son, but gave Him to the death for us, will he not with him give us all things?*

And to close all, He makes these two great immunities good to us in *Christ.* He fixes *there. There* we are freed from all fear of condemnation, or of being hurt by affliction. No accusation nor guiltiness can annul the righteousness of Christ, and that is made ours. No distress nor suffering can cut us off from the love of God; and if it cannot do that, we need not fear it: all other hazards are no hazard, that being sure.

And in confidence of this, the Apostle gives the defiance, casts a challenge to angels, to men, to all the world, upon these two points, Who shall *accuse?*—Who shall *separate?*—Accuse to God, or separate from Him? Whatsoever times may come, the hardest that any can apprehend or foretel, if these two be not sufficient furniture against them, I know not what is.

Men are commonly busied about other events concerning them and theirs, what shall become of this or the other, and what if this or that fall out. But the conscience once raised to this inquiry, the soul being awake to discern the hazard of eternal death, all other fears and questions are drowned and lost in this great question, Am I condemned or not? Is my sin pardoned or not?

And then, a satisfying answer received concerning this, all is quiet; the soul reposes sweetly on God, and puts all its other concernments into His hands. Let Him make me poor and despised, let Him smite and chastise me, He hath forgiven my sin; all is well. That burden

taken off, the soul can go light, yea, can leap and dance under all other burdens. Oh, how it feels itself nimble, as a man eased of a load that he was even fainting under! Oh! blessed the man whose sin is taken off, *lifted from his shoulders*, (that is the word, Psal. xxxii. 1.) laid over upon Christ, who could *bear* the whole load, and *take* it *away*, take it out of sight, which we could never have done; no, they would have sunk us for ever. That one word, ἄιρει, John i. 29, signifies both and answers to the two, Isa. liii. 4, *He hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows;* lifted them away. Oh how sweet a burden, instead of this, is that engagement of *obedience* and *love* to him as our Redeemer, and which is all he lays on us! If we follow him, and bear his cross, he is our strength, and bears both it and us. So then, this is the great point, the heart's ease, to be delivered from the condemning weight of sin.

And certainly, while men do not think thus, their hearts have very slight impressions of the truth of these things. I fear the most of us scarcely believe this condemnation to come, at least very shallowly, and so they cannot much consider the deliverance from it provided for us in Jesus Christ. I cannot see how it is possible for a heart persuaded of these things, to be very careful about any thing beside. You who eat and drink, and labour and trade, and bestow all your time either in the pains or the pleasures of this earth, what think you of eternity? Is it a light thing for you to perish for ever? After a few days vainly spent, to fall under the wrath of God for ever? Oh, that you would be persuaded to think on these things!

And you who have an interest in this free and blessed estate, why are your spirits so cold, so infrequent in the thoughts of it? Why are you not rejoicing in the Lord, gladdening yourselves in secret when you remember this?—Go the world as it will, my sin is forgiven me. Mistake me, accuse me whoso will, my God hath acquitted me in His Christ, and *he* loves me, and lives to intercede for me.

Methinks I hear some say, Ay, they who could say that, might be merry indeed; but alas! I have no such assurance. *Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* That is true, but here is the great point of so hard a resolution, Am I one of these?

That the Apostle doth thus specify the owners of this consolation, by this high and hidden character of their election, is not to render it doubtful and dark; for his main aim, on the contrary, is, both to extend it as far as it can go, and to make it as clear as may be to all that have interest in it: but he designates them by the primitive act of love fixing on them, so as it is now manifested to them in the subsequent effects which flow from their election: called, and sanctified, and conformed to Jesus Christ, both by his Spirit with them, and by the sufferings that without arise against them in the world. They are such as, being *the sons of God*, are *led by the Spirit of God*, and *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

And these things, indeed, considered as their characters, the stamp of God on them, the impressions of their election to life, do check the vain confidence of all carnal, ungodly professors of the name of Christ, and tell them that their pretended title to him is a mere delusion. Certainly, whosoever lives in the love of sin, and takes the flesh for his

guide, that accursed, blind guide is leading him into the pit. What gross folly and impudence is it for any man, walking in the lust of his own heart, to fancy and aver himself to be a partner of that redemption, whereof so great a part is, to deliver us from the power of our iniquities, to renew our hearts, and re-unite them to God, and possess them with His love!

The great evidence of thy election is, love. Thy love to Him, gives certain testimony of His preceding, eternal love to thee: so are they here designated, *they that love God*. Thy choosing Him, is the effect and evidence of His choosing thee. Now, this is not laborious, nor needs to be disputed. Amidst all thy frailties, feel the pulse of thine affection, which way it beats, and ask thy heart whether thou love Him or not; in this thou hast the character of thy election.

Know you not, that the redeemed of Christ and he are one? They live one life, Christ lives in them, and *if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, as the Apostle declares in this chapter. So, then, this we are plainly to tell you, and consider it, you that will not let go your sins and lay hold on Christ, have as yet no share in him.

But on the other side, the truth is, that when souls are once set upon this search, they commonly wind the notion too high, and subtilize too much in the dispute, and so entangle and perplex themselves, and drive themselves further off from that comfort that they are seeking after: such measures and marks of grace, they set to themselves for their rule and standard; and unless they find those without all controversy in themselves, they will not believe that they have an interest in Christ and this blessed and safe estate in him.

To such I would only say, Are you in a willing league with any known sin? Yea, would you willingly, if you might be saved in that way, give up yourself to voluptuousness, and ungodliness, and not at all desire to follow Jesus Christ in the way of holiness? Then truly, I have not any thing as yet to say for your comfort; only there is a salvation provided, and the door is yet open, and your heart may be changed. But, on the other side, are the desires of thy soul after Christ, a whole Christ, to be *righteousness*, and withal *sanctification* to thee? Wouldst thou willingly give up thyself to be ruled by him, and have him for thy king? Hadst thou rather choose to suffer the greatest affliction for his sake, to honour him, than to commit the least sin to displease him? Doth thy heart go out after him, when thou hearest him spoken of? Dost thou account him thy treasure, so that all the world sounds but as an empty shell to thee, when he is named? Says thy soul within thee, Oh, that he were mine! and, Oh, that I were his, that I could please him, and live to him! Then, do not toss thy spirit, and jangle and spin out thy thoughts in fruitless, endless doubtings, but close with this as thy portion, and be of good comfort; thy sins are, or will be, forgiven thee.

I add further: if thou sayest still, that thou findest none of all this, yet, I say, there is warrant for thee to believe and lay hold on this righteousness here held forth, to the end that thou mayest then find those things in thee, and find comfort in them. Thou art convinced of ungodliness; then believe on him who justifies the ungodly. Thou

art condemned; yet Christ is dead and risen. Flee to him as such, as the *Lamb slain, he who was dead and is alive;* and then say, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, or rather, that is risen. Who shall accuse?* It is true, they make clamour and make a noise, both Satan and thy conscience, but how can they fasten any accusation on thee? If they dare *accuse*, yet they cannot *condemn*, when the Judge hath acquitted thee, and declared thee free, who is greater than all, and hath the absolute power of the sentence. All charges and libels come too late, after he hath once pronounced a soul righteous. And who shall condemn? *It is Christ that died.* If the sentence of the law be brought forth, yet, here is the answer, it ought not to be *twice* satisfied; now, once it is satisfied in Christ, he hath died, and that stands for the believer. Whosoever flees to him, and lays hold on him for life, *He* cannot die again, nor canst thou die, for whom he died once. *Or rather is risen;* that raises the assurance higher, and sets it firmer, for this evidences that in his death all was paid. When he, being the surety, and seized on for the debt, and once death's prisoner, yet, was set free, this clears the matter that there is no more to be paid. And yet further, in sign that all is done, he is raised to the height of honour above all principalities and powers, is set at the right hand of the Father, and there he sits and lives *to make intercession*, to sue out the fulfilling of all for believers, the bringing of them home, lives to see all made good that he died and covenanted for. So, now that his righteousness is thine who believest, any challenge must meet with Christ first, and if it seize not on him, it cannot light on thee, for thou art in him, married to him. And the same triumph that he speaks, Isa. l. 8, whence these words are borrowed, is made thine, and thou mayest now speak it in him. I know not what can cast him down, who hath this word to rest upon, and to comfort himself in.

SERMON XVII.

Romans viii. 35, &c.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? *&c.*

Is this he who so lately cried out, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* who now triumphs, O happy man! *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Yes, it is the same. Pained, then, with the thoughts of that miserable conjunction with a body of death, and so crying out, who will deliver, who will separate me from that? now, now, he hath found a Deliverer to do that for him, to whom he is for ever united, and he glories now in his inseparable union and unalterable love, which none can divide him from. Yea, it is through him, that presently after that word of complaint he praises God; and now, in him he triumphs. So vast a difference is there betwixt a Christian taken in himself, and in Christ! When he views himself in himself, then he is

nothing but a poor, miserable, polluted, perishing wretch; but then he looks again, and sees himself in Christ, and there he is rich, and safe, and happy; he triumphs, and he glories in it, above all the painted prosperities, and against all the horrid adversities of the world; he lives in his Christ, content and happy, and laughs at all enemies.

And he extends his triumph; he makes a common good of it to all believers, speaks it in their name, *Who shall separate us?* and would have them partake of the same confidence, and speak in the same style with him. It is vain that men fancy these to be expressions of revelations, or some singularly-privileged assurances; then, they would not suit their end, which is clearly and undoubtedly, the encouragement of all the children of God, upon grounds that are peculiar to them from all the rest of the world, but common to them all, in all ages, and all varieties of condition.

It is true, all of them have not alike clear and firm apprehensions of their happy and sure estate, and scarcely any of them are alike at all times; yet, they have all and always the same right to this estate, and to the comfort of it, and when they stand in a right light to view it, they do see it so, and rejoice in it.

There be indeed some kinds of assurance that are more rare and extraordinary, some immediate glances or coruscations of the love of God upon the soul of a believer, a smile of His countenance; and this doth exceedingly refresh, yea, ravish the soul, and enables it mightily for duties and sufferings. These He dispenses arbitrarily and freely, where and when He will. Some weaker Christians sometimes have them, while stronger are strangers to them, the Lord training them to live more contentedly by faith till the day of vision come.

And that is the other, the less ecstatical, but the more constant and fixed kind of assurance, the proper assurance of faith: the soul, by believing, cleaves unto God in Christ as he offers himself in the gospel, and thence is possessed with a sweet and calm persuasion of his love; that being the proper work, to appropriate him, to make Christ, and in him, eternal life, ours. So that it is the proper result and fruit of that its acting, especially when it acts any thing strongly, to quiet the soul in him. Then, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*, and from that peace, joy, yea, even *glorying in tribulation*, as there follows. And these springing, not from an extraordinary sense or view, but from the very innate virtue of faith working kindly and according to its own nature.

Therefore many Christians do prejudice their own comfort and darken their spirits, by not giving freedom to faith to act according to its nature and proper principles. They will not believe till they find some evidence, or assurance, which is quite to invert the order of the thing, and to look for fruit without setting a root for it to grow from.

Would you take Christ upon the absolute word of promise, tendering him to you, and rest on him so, this would ingraft you into life itself, for that he is, and so those fruits of the Holy Ghost would bud and flourish in your hearts. From that very believing on him, would arise this persuasion, yea, even to a gloriation, and an humble boasting in his love. *Who shall accuse—Who shall condemn—Who shall separate?*

The undivided companion and undoubted helper and preserver of this confidence of faith, is an *active love* to Christ, leading to a constant study of holiness and strife against sin, which is the grand enemy of faith, which obstructs the very vital spirits of faith, which makes it sickly and heavy in its actings, and causes the palsy in the hand of faith, so that it cannot lay so fast hold. Therefore, this you should be careful of; yea, know that of necessity it attends faith, and as faith grows, holiness will grow, and holiness growing will mutually strengthen and establish faith. The comforts of the Holy Ghost are holy, purifying comforts, and the more the soul is purified and made holy, the more is it cleared and enlarged to receive much of these comforts. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Unholiness is as damps and filthy mists in the soul; it darkens it all.

Hence it is evident in what way Christians may and ought to aspire to this assurance. It is their portion, and in this way they are to aspire to it, and shall find it; if not immediately, yet, let them wait and go on in this way, they shall not miscarry.

Again, it appears that this assurance is no enemy to *holy* diligence, nor a friend of *carnal* security; on the contrary, it is the only thing that doth eminently ennoble and embolden the soul for all adventures and services. Base fears and doubtings, wherein some place much of religion, (and many weak Christians seem to be in that mistake, to think it a kind of holy, spiritual temper to be questioning and doubting,) I say these base fears can never produce any thing truly generous, no height of obedience: they do nothing but entangle and disable the soul for every good work. *Perfect love casts out* this *fear*, and works a sweet unperplexing fear, a holy weariness not to offend, which fears nothing else. And this confidence of love is the great secret of comfort, and of ability to do God service. Nothing makes so strong and healthful a constitution of soul, as pure love: it dares submit to God, and resign itself to Him; it dares venture itself in His hand, and trust His word, and seeks no more than how to please Him. A heart thus composed, goes readily and cheerfully unto all services, to do, to suffer, to live, to die, at His pleasure; and firmly stands to this, that *nothing can separate* it from that which is sufficient for it, which is all its happiness, *the love of God in Christ Jesus.* Ver. 39. That is, indeed, His love to us, but it is so as it includes inseparably the inseparableness of our love to Him. For observe the things specified as most likely, if any thing, to separate us: *Shall tribulation, or distress,* &c. Now these especially, being endured for His sake, cannot immediately have any likely visage of altering His love to us, but rather confirm us in it; but these shall not separate us, by altering our love to Him, by driving us from Him, and carrying us into any way of defection, or denial of His name, and so cut us off from our union with Him, and interest in His love; and that is the way wherein the weak Christian will most apprehend the hazard of separation. Now, the Apostle speaks his own sense, and would raise in his brethren the same confidence, as to that danger. There is no fear; not one of these things shall be able to carry us away. These mighty waves shall not unsettle our faith, nor quench the flame of our love. We shall be victors, and more than victors, in all. But how? Ver. 37:

Through Him that hath loved us. Thus His love makes sure ours. He hath such hold of our hearts as He will not let go, nor suffer us to let go our hold: all is fast by His strength. He will not loose us, nor shall any be able to pluck us out of His hand.

Jesus Christ is the *medium* of this love, the middle link that keeps all safe together betwixt God and man, being so closely united in his personal nature, and the persons of men in and by him, to the Father. So here, it is first called the *love of Christ*, ver. 35, and then, in the close, *The love of God in Christ;* the soul being first carried to him as nearest, but so carried by him into that primitive love of God that flows in Christ, and that gave even Christ to us as before. And this is the bottom-truth, the firm ground of the saints' perseverance, which men not taking aright, must needs question the matter. Yea, we may put it out of question upon their suppositions, for if our own purposes and strength were all we had to rely on, alas! how soon were we shaken!

So *the love of God in Christ* is not only here mentioned as the point of happiness, from which we cannot be removed, but as the principle of firmness that makes itself sure of us, and us of it, and will not part with us.

Now, it is no pride in a Christian, but the truest humility, to triumph and glory in this. This is it that makes all sure; this is the great comfort and the victory of the saints. He that loved us and bought us so dear, will not lightly slip from us; yea, upon no terms will he let us go, unless some stronger than he is, meet with him, and by force bereave him of us; which we know is impossible. He and his Father, who are one in themselves, and in their strength, and one in this love, are greater and stronger than all; and he that once overcame for us, always overcomes in us.

Thus he lets temptation and tribulations assault us, and thus neither disproves his love, nor endangers his right to us; yea, it doth but give proof and evidence of the invincible firmness of both. He suffers others to lie soft, and sit warm, and pamper their flesh at leisure; but he hath nobler business for his champions, his worthies, and most of all for the stoutest of them: he calls them forth to honourable services, to the hardest encounters; he sets them on, one to fight with sickness, another with poverty, another with reproaches and persecutions, with prisons and irons, and with death itself. And all this while, loves he them less, or they him? Oh, no. He looks on and rejoices to see them do valiantly; it is the joy of his heart, no sight on earth so sweet to him; and it is all the while by his subduing, and in his strength, that they hold out in the conflict, and obtain the conquest.

And thus they are the more endeared to him by these services and these adventures of love for him, and he still likewise is the more endeared to them. Certainly, the more any one suffers for Christ, the more he loves Christ: as love doth grow and engage itself by all it does and suffers, and burns hotter by what it encounters and overcomes, as by fuel added to it. As to Jesus Christ, by what he suffered for us we are the dearer to him, so he is to us by all we suffer for his sake.

Love grows most by opposition from others whosoever, when it is

sure of acceptance and the correspondence of mutual love in the party loved. Above all, this heavenly, Divine love is, *strong as death*, a vehement flame, *a flame of God*, indeed, as the word is, Cant. viii. 6, and *many waters cannot quench it;* not all these that here follow one another, *tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword.* Yea, in the midst of these, I say, it grows: the soul cleaves closer to Christ, the more attempts are made to remove it from him, though *killed all the day long.* This passage from the Psalms is most fit, both to testify that persecution is not unusually the lot of the saints, and to give instance of their firm adherence to God in all troubles, as the Church there professeth. And if the saints in that dispensation could reckon in such a manner, much more ought Christians, upon a clearer discovery of the covenant of grace and their union with God in Christ. The saints are as in a common butchery in the world; yea, not only *as sheep for the slaughter*, but sometimes as sheep for the altar, men thinking it a sacrifice. *They that kill you*, says our Saviour, *shall think they do God service.* Yet even this pulls not from him. They part with life; ay, why not? This life is but a death, and He is our life for whom we lose it.

All these things do but increase the victories and triumphs of love, and make it more glorious: as they tell of her multiplying labours to that champion, they are not only conquerors, but *more than conquerors*, by multiplied victories, and they gain in them all both more honour and more strength; they are the fitter for new adventures, and so more than simple conquerors. We overcome, and are sure not to lose former conquests, but to add more, and conquer on to the end; which other conquerors are not sure of. Oftentimes they outlive their own successes and renown, and lose on a sudden what they have been gaining a whole lifetime. Not so here: we are secured in the Author of our victories. It is *through Him that hath loved us;* and he cannot grow less, yea, he shall still grow greater, till all his enemies be made his footstool.

Having given the challenge and finding none to answer, and that all, the most apparent, are in a most rhetorical accumulation silenced, *tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword*, &c., he goes on confidently in the triumph, and avers his assurance of full and final victory against all imaginable power of all the creatures: *Neither death nor life*, not the fear of the most terrible death, nor the hope or love of the most desirable life. And in the height of this courage and confidence, he supposes impossible enemies, *Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers;*—unless you take it of the angels of darkness only; but if it could be possible that the others should offer at such a thing, they would be too weak for it. No sense of any *present things*, nor apprehensions of *things to come;* not any thing within the vast circle of the world above or below; *nor any creature*, can do it. Here sin is not specified, because he is speaking of outward oppositions and difficulties expressly, and because that is removed by the former challenge, *Who shall accuse?* that asserting a free and final acquittance of all sin, a pardon of the curse, which yet will never encourage any of those to sin who live in the assurance of this love. Oh, no; and these general words do include it too, *Nothing present, nor to come,*

&c. So it is carried clear, and is the satisfying comfort of all whom Jesus Christ hath drawn after him, and united in his love.

It is enough; whatsoever they may be separated from, the things or persons dearest in this world, it is no matter; the jewel is safe. None can take my Christ from me, and I am safe in him, as his purchase. None can take me from him, and being still in his love, and through him in the Father's love, that is sufficient. What can I fear? What can I want? All other hazards signify nothing. How little value are they of! And for how little a while am I in danger of them! Methinks, all should look on a believer with an emulous eye, and wish his estate more than a king's.

Alas, poor creatures! rich men, great men, princes and kings, what vain things are they that you embrace and cleave to! Whatsoever they be, soon must you part. Can you say of any of them, *Who shall separate us?* Storms may arise and scatter ships that sail smoothly together in fair weather. Thou mayest be removed, by public commotions and calamities, from thy sweet dwellings, and societies, and estates. You may even live to see and seek your parting. At last you *must* part, for you must die. Then, farewell parks and palaces, gardens and honours, and even crowns themselves. Then, dearest friends, children and wife must be parted with. *Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens uxor.* And what hast thou left, poor soul, who hast not Christ, but that which thou wouldst gladly part with and canst not, the condemning guilt of all thy sins?

But the soul that is in Christ, when other things are pulled away, feels little or nothing: he cleaves to Christ, and these separations pain him not. Yea, when that great separatist, death, comes, that breaks all other unions, even that of the soul and body, yet, so far is it from separating the believer's soul from its beloved Lord Jesus, that, on the contrary, it carries it into the nearest union with him, and the fullest enjoyment of him for ever.

SERMON XVIII.

Isaiah lix. 1, 2.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.

Our vain minds are naturally fruitful in nothing more than in mistakes of God. For the most part we think not on Him, and when we do it, we fancy Him according to our own affections, which are wholly perverse and crooked.

Men commonly judge it a vain thing to spend much pains and time in worshipping Him; and if they are convinced of this, and tied to it by the profession of His name, then they think all religion is a shell of external diligences and observances, and count it strange if this be not accepted. In the former chapter we find this, in the Prophet's

contest with the people about their fasting, and their opinion of it; he cuts up their sacrifices, and lets them see what was within; the skin was sound and looked well, but being opened, the entrails were found rotten. And here he enters into another contest, against the latent atheism of their hearts, who after their manner of seeking God, not finding Him, and not being delivered, are ready to think that He either cannot, or will not help, and rather rest on that gross mistake, than inquire into themselves for the true cause of their continuing calamities: they incline rather to think it is some indisposition in God to help, than what it truly is, a want of reformation in themselves that hinders it. It is not likely that they would say thus, or speak it out in plain terms; no, nor possibly speak it formally and distinctly within, not so much as in their thoughts; and yet, they might have a confused, dark conceit of this. And much of the atheism of man's heart is of this fashion: not formed into resolved propositions, but latent*. in confused notions of it, scarcely discernible by himself; at least, not searched out and discerned in his own breast: there they are, and he sees them not, not written assertions, but flying fumes, filling the soul, and hindering it to read the characters of God that are writ upon the conscience.

The impenitency of men, in any condition, and particularly under distress, is from the want of clear apprehensions and deep persuasions of God, of His just anger provoked by their sin, and of His sweetness and readiness to forgive and embrace a returning sinner; of His sovereign power, able to rid them out of the greatest trouble, His ear, quick enough to hear the cries, yea, the least whispering of a humbled heart in the lowest deep of his sorrow, and His arm, long enough to reach them, and strong enough to draw them forth. *He that comes unto God, must believe that he is*, says the Apostle, Heb. xi. 6. So, certainly, he who *believes* that, must *come;* it will sweetly constrain him: he cannot but come, who is so persuaded. Were men's hearts much impressed with that belief in all their troubles, they would eye men less, and God more, and without delay they would fasten upon the Church's resolution, Hos. vi. 1: *Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us, He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.* And this is the very thing that the Prophet would here persuade to by his present doctrine; and having impleaded them guilty, he sets them a copy of humble confession, ver. 12, &c. Hence the frequent complaints in the Psalms, *Why hidest Thou Thyself?* So Psalm xxii. 2: *I cry, but Thou hearest not.*

In the words of these two verses, these two things appear; *a sad condition*, and *the true cause of it.*

The *condition*, I think, I have reason to call *sad:* it is God hiding His face that He will not hear. This may be either the *personal* estate of His *children*, or the *public* estate of His *Church.* From a soul, He hides His face, not so much in the withdrawing of sensible comforts and sweet tastes of joy, which to many are scarcely known, and to such as do know them, commonly do not continue very long, but it is a suspension of that lively influence of His Divine power, for raising the mind in the contemplation of Him and communion with Him in prayer

* Ezek. viii. 7. *Behind the wall.*

and meditation, which yet may be, where those relishes and senses of joy are not. And the returns of it appear in beating down the power of sin, or abating and subduing it, making the heart more pure and heavenly, making it more to live by faith in Christ, to be often at the throne of grace, and to receive gracious answers, supplies of wants, and assistances against temptations. Now, when there is a cessation and obstruction of these and such like workings, the face of God is *hid;* the soul is at a loss, seeks still and cannot find Him whom it loveth. And in this condition it cannot take comfort in other things; they are too low. It is a higher and nobler desire than to be satisfied, or diverted, with the childish things that even men delight in who know not God. It is a love-sickness, which nothing can cure but the presence and love of the party loved. Yea, nothing can so much as allay the pain, and give an interval of ease, or recover a fainting fit, but some good word or look, or at least some kind message, from Him. Set thee in a palace, and all delights about thee, and a crown on thy head, yet, if His love has ceased on thy heart, these are all nothing without Him. It was after David was advanced to his kingdom, and is in the Psalm of the dedication of his royal house, that he said, *Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled.* Psal. xxx. 7. *q. d.* All is dark; all the shining marble, and the gold, and the azure, lose their lustre, when Thou art not here dwelling with me.

And thus for the Church; God is the proper light, the beauty, the life of it. Deck it with all this world's splendour, with all the dresses of pompous worship, these are not its genuine beauty; and they provoke Him who is its *ornament,* (as is Jer. ii. 32,) to depart. But give it the native purity and beauty of holy ministers and ordinances well regulated, yet, even that is but a dead comeliness, proportion and feature without life, when God is absent.

And as for the matter of deliverances and working for her, which is here the thing in hand, none can do any thing in that, not the wisest, nor the best of men, with all their combined wit and strength, when He retires and comes not forth, doth not show Himself on the behalf of His people, and work their works for them. These have, it may be, some kind of prayer possibly; they offer at extraordinaries, and yet obtain nothing, are not heard. The saddest note in all the Song of Lamentations, is that at chapter iii., ver. 43, 44. *Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us; Thou hast slain, Thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered Thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.* Still, while that door stands open, there is hope and remedy for other evils; but that being shut, what can a people, or a soul expect, but growing troubles, one sorrow upon the back of another? Yea, that is the great trouble, the hiding of His face, and His refusing to hear. Observe Job xxxiv. 29: *When He giveth peace, who then can make trouble?* Now the other in the same terms, would have been, *When He makes trouble, who can give peace?* But instead of this, it is, *When He hides His face, who then can behold Him?* No peace but in beholding Him, and nothing but trouble, *that* is the grand trouble, when He *hides His face.* And it is expressed in both cases, whether it be personal or national, *whether against a nation or a man only.*

This is the thing wherein the strength of other troubles lie, that which gives them weight, when they impart and signify thus much, that the face of God is hid from a soul or a people.

We ought to inquire if this be not our condition at this time. Hath He not hid His face from us? Are we not left in the dark, that we know not which way to turn us? Either we must sit still and do nothing, or, if we stir, we do but rush one upon another, as in darkness, contesting each to have the way, and yet, when we have it given us, we know not well which way to go. And we think to be cleared, but it fails us: as in this chapter, ver. 9: *We wait for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness: we grope for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noon-day as in the night.* Our counsels are strangely darkened, and there is no right understanding one of another. By all our debates, little or no clearing of things is attained, but our passions are more inflamed, and parties are further off; the light of sound judgment gone, and with it the heat of love, instead of which, that miserable infernal heat, heat without light, mutual hatreds and revilings; both sides (verbally at least) agreeing in the general terms both of their desires and designs, and yet, falling out about modes and fashions of them. And to say no more of parties, the enemies of religion on both hands, right and left, are in action and in power, and only those who love that which we conceive is the way of truth, standing as a naked prey to whether of the two shall prevail. Desires and prayers we have presented, and see as yet no appearance of an issue, but further confusions, even fasting to strife and debate. And where are there any that look like persons to stand in the gap, lifting up *holy hands, without wrath or doubting?* Hearts are still as unhumbled, and live as unreformed as ever! New intestine troubles are most likely to arise, few or none laying it to heart, and with calm, lowly spirits mourning before God for it. *Ephraim against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim, and they both against Judah; and for all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.* Isa. ix. 21.

But generally, men ought to be less in descanting one on another, and more in searching and inquiring each into himself. Even where it may seem zeal, yet, nature and passion may more easily let in the other; but this self-search and self-censure is an uneasy task, the most unpleasant of all things to our carnal self-loving hearts. But the heavy hand of God shall never turn from us, nor His gracious face turn towards us, till there is more of this amongst us. Most say their prayers, and as they are little worth, they look little after them, inquire not what becomes of them. But, my brethren, would we continue to call, and find favourable answers, we must be more within. The heart must be made a temple to God, wherein sacrifices do ascend; but that they may be accepted, it must be purged of idols, nothing left in any corner though never so secret, to stir the jealousy of our God, who sees through all. Oh, happy that heart that is, as Jacob's house, purged, in which no more idols are to be found, but the Holy God dwelling there alone as in His holy temple!

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened.] Much of all knowledge lies in the knowledge of causes; and in practical things, much of the

right ordering of them, depends on it. The true cause of a disease found out, is half the cure. Here we have the miseries of an afflicted people reduced to their real cause: that which is not the cause, is first removed. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God.*

We are not only to be untaught this error, that we think not so, but are to be taught to believe and think on that truth, that God is still the same in power and goodness, to keep up the notion of it in our hearts. So we may call in past experiences and relations of God's former workings for His people, and that with much use and comfort. He who brought forth His people out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, (as still they are reminded of that deliverance by the prophets, and called to look on it as the great instance and pledge of their restoration by the same Hand,) can again deliver His people when at the lowest. Isa. l. 2.

And with this belief, we shall not faint in the time of deep distress, whether our own, or the Church's, knowing the unalterable, invincible, infinite power of our God; that all the strength of all enemies is nothing, and less than nothing, to His: their devices, knots of straw. What is it that is to be done for His Church, if her and His glory be interested in it? There remains no question in point of difficulty; that hath no place with Him. The more difficult, yea, if impossible for us or any human strength, the more fit work for Him. *Because it is hard for you, shall it also be hard for Me?* saith the Lord in the prophet. And where Jeremy uses that argument in prayer, he hath his answer returned in the same words, as the echo to the prayer, resounding from Heaven, (ch. xxxii., ver. 17, compared with ver. 27,) and that in relation to the great restoration of the Jews from Babylon, as is expressly promised, ver. 36, &c. And there the Prophet gives that first great example of Divine power, the forming of the world, ver. 17: *Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power.*

Men think it is an easy, common belief, and that none doubt of the omnipotency of God. But Oh, the undaunted confidence it would give to the heart, being indeed firmly believed, and wisely used and applied to particular exigencies! Men either doubt, or (which, upon the matter, for the use of it, is all one) they forget who the Lord is, when their hearts misgive them because of the Church's weakness, and the enemy's power. What is that upon the matter? Remember whose is the Church, God's, and what His power is, and then see if thou canst find any cause of fear. See Isa. xli. 14. *Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men—few* or *weak men*—(so the word is,) *of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.* So, Isa. li. 12, 13. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you.* There is the strength of it. *Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?* Do but think aright on Him, and then see if it be *possible* for thee to fear. All thy little doubts and despondencies of mind will fly and vanish away before one clear thought of thy God. Though the world were turning upside down, it shall go well with them who fear Him.

And as this apprehension of God strengthens faith, so it quickens prayer. It stirs thee up to seek to Him for help, when thou knowest and rememberest that there it is. There is help in Him, power enough, and no want of readiness and good will neither. If we apply ourselves to seek Him aright, His hand is as strong to save, and His ear as quick to hear, as ever. And in this, that *His ear is not heavy*, is signified both His speedy and certain knowledge of all requests sent up to Him, and His gracious inclination to receive them. Now, these persuasions do undoubtedly draw up the heart towards Him.

Again, as they strengthen faith, and quicken prayer, so, they teach us repentance, direct us inward to self-examination, to the searching, and finding out, and purging out of sin, when deliverance is delayed; for we are sure it stops not upon either of these on God's part, either the shortness of His hand, or the dulness of His ear. Whence is it then? Certainly, it must be somewhat on our side, that works against us, and prejudices our desires. So here, thus you see the clear aim of it: *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.* What is it then that hinders? Oh! it is this, out of all doubt.—*Your iniquities separate*, old sins unrepented of, and new sins still added, as all impenitent sinners do. Now this separates *between you and God*, for He is a holy God, a just God: who hates iniquity. And between you and *your* God: that pleads no connivance at your sins, but rather calls for nearer inspection and sharper punishment. *He will be sanctified in those that are near Him*, in *them* especially. Their sin is aggravated much by that relation, *your* God. To sin against Him so grossly, so continuedly, with so high a hand, and so impenitent hearts; not reclaimed by all His mercies, by the remembrance of His covenant made with you, and mercies bestowed on you, nor by the fear of His judgments threatened, nor by the feeling of them inflicted; no returning or relenting, not of His own people to their God—surely, you must be yet more punished. Amos iii. 2: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities. q. d.* I let others escape with many things that I cannot pass over in you. You fast and pray, it may be, you howl and keep a noise, but you amend nothing, forsake not one sin for all your sufferings, and for all your moanings and cries. You would be delivered, but do not part with one of your lusts or wicked customs, even for a deliverance; and so the quarrel remains still. It is that which separates, is as a huge wall betwixt us, betwixt Me and your prayers, and betwixt you and My helping hand; and though I do hear, and could help, yet, I will not: till this wall be down, you shall not see Me, nor find by any gracious sign that I hear you.—This hides His face, *that He will not hear.*

This way God hath established in His ordinary methods with His people: though sometimes He uses his own privilege, yet, usually He links *sin* and *calamity* together, and *repentance* and *deliverance* together.

Sin separates and hides His face, not only from a people that professes His name, but even from a soul that really bears His name stamped upon it. Though it cannot fully, and for ever, cut off such a soul, yet, in part, and for a time, it may, yea, to be sure, it will separate,

and hide the face of God from them. Their daily inevitable frailties do not this: but either a course of careless walking, and many little unlawful liberties taken to themselves, that will rise and gather as a cloud, and hide the face of God; or some one gross sin, especially if often reiterated, will prove as a firm stone-wall, or rather as a brazen-wall, built up by their own hands betwixt them and Heaven, and will not be so easily dissolved or broken down; and yet, till that be, the light of His countenance, who is the life of the soul, will be eclipsed and withheld from it.

And this considered, besides that law of love that will forbid so foul ingratitude, yet, I say, this considered, even our own interest will make us wary of sinning. Though we were sure not to be yet altogether separated from the love of God by it, yet, thou who hast any persuasion of that love, darest thou venture upon any known sin? Thou art not hazardless and free from all damage by it, if thou hast need of that argument to restrain thee. Then, before thou run upon it, sit down and reckon the expense; see what it will cost thee if thou do commit it. Thou knowest that once it cost the heart-blood of thy Redeemer to expiate it, and is that a light matter to thee? And though that paid all that score, nothing thou canst suffer being able to do any thing that way, yet, as an unavoidable present fruit of it, it will draw on this damage; thou shalt be sure for a time, it may be for a long time, possibly most of thy time, nearly all thy days, it may darken much that love of God to thee, which if thou dost but esteem, think on it. It changes not in Him, but a sad change will sin bring on thee, as to thy sight and apprehension of it. Many a sweet hour of blessed communion with thy God shalt thou miss, and either be dead and stupid in that want, or mourn after Him, and yet find, though sighs and tears continue, the door shut, yea, a dead wall raised betwixt thee and Him, and at best much straitening and pains to take it down again; contrary to other walls and buildings, which are far more easily pulled down than built up, but this is a great deal easier built up than pulled down. True, thy God could cast it down with a word, and it is His free grace that must do it, otherwise thou couldest never remove it: yet will He have thee feel thy own handy-work, and know thy folly. Thou must be at pains to dig at it, and may be it will cost thee broken bones in taking it down, pieces of it falling heavy and sad upon thy conscience, and crushing thee; as David cried out at that work, for a healing word from God, *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.* Psal. li. 8. It will force thee to say, O fool that I was, what meant I! Oh! it is good, keeping near God, and raising no divisions. What are sins? False delights, by which a man but provides his own vexation. Now, this distance from God, and all this turmoiling, and breaking, and crying before He appears again, consider if any pleasure of sin can countervail this damage. Surely, when thou art not out of thy wits, thou wilt never make such a bargain for all the pleasure thou canst make out of any sin, to breed thyself all this pains, and all this grief, at once to displease thy God, and displease thyself, and make a partition between Him and thee. Oh, sweet and safe ways of holiness, walking with God in His company and favour! He *that orders his*

conversation aright, he *sees the loving-kindness of the Lord:* it is shown to him; he lives in the sight of it. Psal. l. 23.

But if any such separation is made, yet, is it thy great desire to have it removed? Why then there is hope. See to it, labour to break it down, and pray to Him to help thee, and He will put forth His hand, and then it must fall. And in all thy sense of separation, look to him who *brake down the middle wall of partition*. Eph. ii. 14. There it is spoken of as betwixt men, Jews and Gentiles, but so as it was also between the Gentiles and God, who were separated from His people, and from Himself. See ver. 16: *That he might reconcile both to God in one body;* and ver. 18: *Through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father.* And then he adds, that they were *no more strangers and foreigners*, dwelling on the other side of the wall, παροίκοι, as the word is, *but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

Oh, that we knew more what it were to live in this sweet society, in undivided fellowship with God! Alas! how little is understood this living in Him, separated from sin and this world, which otherwise do separate from Him; solacing our hearts in His love, and despising the base muddy delights that the world admires; hoping for that *New Jerusalem*, where none of these walls of sin are, nor any one stone of them, and for that bright day wherein there is no cloud nor mist to hide our Sun from us.

Now, for the condition of the Church, know sin to be the great obstructor of its peace, making Him to withdraw His hand, and hide His face, and to turn away His ear from our prayers, and loath our fasts: as Isa. i. 15, and Jer. xiv. 12. The quarrel stands; sin not repented of and removed. The wall is still standing; oaths, and sabbath-breaking, and pride, and oppression, and heart-burnings still remaining. Oh, what a noise of religion and reformation! All sides are for the name of it, and how little of the thing! The Gospel itself is despised, grown stale, as trivial doctrine. Oh, my beloved, if I could speak many hours without intermission, all my cry would be, *Repent and pray. Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord our God.* Oh, what walls of every one's sin are set to it! Dig diligently to bring down thine own; and for those huge walls of public national guiltinesses, if thou canst do nothing to them more, compass them about as Jericho, and look up to Heaven for their downfall. Cry, Lord, these we ourselves have reared, but without Thee who can bring them down? Lord, throw them down for us. A touch of Thy hand, a word of Thy mouth, will make them fall.—Were we less busied in impertinencies, and more in this most needful work, it might do some good. Who knows but the Lord might make His own way clear, and return and visit us, and make His face to shine, that we might be saved!

SERMON XIX.

Romans xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

The highest beauty of the soul, the very image of God upon it, is holiness. He that is aspiring to it himself, is upon a most excellent design; and if he can do any thing to excite and call up others to it, he performs a work of the greatest charity.

This, St. Paul doth frequently and pressingly in his writings. This epistle, as it doth admirably clear the doctrine of *justification*, it doth not less earnestly urge the doctrine of *sanctification*. That one sentence about the middle thereof, does excellently unite them, and so is the summary of all that goes before, and all that follows: Ch. viii. ver. 1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The present words are as an alarm, or morning watch-bell, of singular use, not only awaking a Christian to his day's work, but withal reminding him what it is. And these two shall be all our division of them. 1. Our *awaking* sounded. 2. Our *walking* directed. The former, ver. 11, 12, tells us, it is time to rise, and calls us up to put on our clothes, and, being soldiers, our arms. The latter, ver. 13, directeth our behaviour and employment throughout the day. The last verse doth shortly, and that fully and clearly, fold up both together. We shall take the words just as they lie.

And that, knowing the time. This imports much in all actions, and here it is the Apostle's great argument. Now it is unfit to sleep, *knowing the time:* however it might have been before, now it is very unseasonable and unsuitable, that you lie snoring as at midnight. Do you know what o'clock it is (ἡ ὥρα)? It is time to rise; it is morning, the day begins to appear.

[*Observation.*] All the days of sinful nature are dark night, in which there is no right discerning of spiritual things. Some light there is of reason, to direct natural and civil actions, but no daylight. Till the sun arise it is night still, for all the stars, and the moon to help them. Notwithstanding natural speculations, that are more remote, and all prudence and policy for affairs, that come somewhat nearer to action, yet we are still in the night. And you do think that a sad life, but the truth is, we sleep on in it, and our heads are still full of new dreams which keep us sleeping. We are constantly drunk with cares or desires of sense, and so our sleep continues. Sometimes it is called *death—dead in sins*, &c. Now sleep is brother to death; and so, by it not unfitly is the same state resembled. No spiritual life we have at all, and therefore in that sense are truly dead. But because

there is in us a natural life, and in that, a capacity of spiritual life, therefore we are said to be asleep. As in a deep sleep, our soul is bound up and drowned in flesh, through a surcharge of the vapours of gross, sensible things that we glut ourselves withal; and the condition of our wisest thoughts, in relation to our highest good, are nothing but dreams and reveries. Your projectings, and bargainings, and buildings, these be a better sort of dreams; but your envyings, and mutual despisings and discontents, your detracting and evil-speaking, these are more impertinent, and to yourselves more perplexing. And your sweetest enjoyments in this life, which you think most real, are but shadows of delight, a more pleasant sort of dreams. All pomps and royal solemnities, the Scripture calls φαντασιας, *phantasies*, Acts xxv. 23. A man will not readily think so while he is in them. *Somnium narrare vigilantis est.* We do not perceive the vanity of our dreams, and know that they are so, till we be awaked. Sometimes in a dream a man will have such a thought that it is but a dream, yet doth he not thoroughly see the folly thereof, but goes on in it. The natural man may have sometimes a glance of such thoughts, that all these things he is either turmoiling or delighting in, are vanity and nothing to the purpose; yet, he awakes not, but raves on still in them; he shifts a little, turns on his bed as a door on its hinges, but turns not off, does not rise.

But the spiritual-minded Christian, who is indeed awake, and looks back on his former thoughts and ways, Oh how does he disdain himself, and all his former high fancies that he was most pleased with, finding them dreams! Oh what a fool, what a wretch was I, while my head was full of such stuff, building castles in the air, imagining and catching at such gains, and such preferments and pleasures, and either they still running before me, and I could not overtake them, or, if I thought I did, what have I now, when I see what it is, and find that I have embraced a shadow, false hopes, and fears, and joys! *He thinks he hath eaten, and his soul is empty.* Isa. xxix. 8. And you that will sleep on, may; but sure I am, when you come to your deathbed, if possibly you awake then, then shall you look back, with sad regret, upon whatsoever you most esteemed and gloried in under the sun. While they are coming towards you, they have some show; but, as a dream that is past, when these gay things are flown by, then we see how vain they are. As that luxurious king who caused to be painted on his tomb two fingers, as sounding one upon another, with that word, *All is not worth so much, Non tanti est.* I know not how men make a shift to satisfy themselves; but, take a sober and awakened Christian, and set him in the midst of the best of all things that are here, his heart would burst with despair of satisfaction, were it not for a hope that he hath, beyond all that this poor world either attains or is seeking after, and that hope is, indeed, the dawning of the day that is here spoken of.

It is time to awake, says he; *your salvation is nearer than when ye believed.* That bright day you look for, is hastening forward; it is nearer than when you began to believe. The night is far spent, the gross darkness is already past, some daylight there is, and it is every moment growing, and the perfect, full morning-light of it is very near.

[*Observation.*] Grace, and the Gospel that works it, compared with

the dark night of nature, is the day, and it is often so called: the Apostle here calls it so, *Let us walk honestly as in the day.* But yet, that same light of the Gospel shining to us in the word, and within us by the Spirit, is but the appearance or approaching of the day, a certain pledge of it, yea, a kind of beginning of it, telling us that it is near. It is one and the same light, and where it enters into any soul, it makes sure that eternal full day to it, that it shall not be disappointed of, more than the day can go back, and the sun fail to rise when the dawn is begun. And this begun light is still growing clearer, and tending to the perfect day. Prov. iv. 18. And at the first peep or appearance of it, so much it is, that the soul is called to awake and arise, and put on day-clothes, and apply itself to the actions of the day; and that is the thing the Apostle here presses by it.

Oh, the blessed Gospel, revealing God in Christ, and calling up sinners to communion with Him, dispelling that black night of ignorance and accursed darkness that otherwise had never ended, but passed on to an endless night of eternal misery! Says not Zacharias with good reason in his song, that it was *through the tender mercy of God that this dayspring from on high did visit us?*

Now, says the Apostle, *this day appearing, it is time to awake.* And the longer it is since it began to appear, and the clearer the light grows, the more high time is it to awake and rise, and cast off night-clothes and night-works, *works of darkness*, and to put on garments, yea, *armour of light.* He that is a soldier, his garments are not on till his arms be on and his sword about him; then he is ready: especially in a time and posture of war, and the enemy lying nigh, even round about him; and this is every Christian's state while he is here. An *armour of light*, not only strong and useful, but comely and graceful, fit to walk abroad in, bright shining armour; as your old poets describe their champions, dazzling their enemies' eyes.

And thus apparelled, we are to behave ourselves suitably, to *walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness.* That is a night-work, as the Apostle hath it, 1 Thess. v. 7. To stagger and reel in the streets in daylight, to be drunk in the morning, is most shameful: so is that spirit of drunkenness as unbeseeming a Christian; to see them hurrying and justling one another, as drunk with love of earthly things, and their spirits by that besotted and unfitted for spiritual things, that they find no pleasure in them.

Chambering and wantonness. All impure, lascivious conversation, how vile are these, and unfit for the light! Even Nature is ashamed to be seen in these things, in the natural light of the day; much more will Grace in the spiritual light of the Gospel.

Strife and envy. As shuffles and hot quarrels are most of all unseemly in the streets in daylight, so, the quarrels and jarrings of Christians are very shameful before the light wherein they walk. The Gospel of Christ, the grand doctrine thereof, is meekness and love. But Oh, where are they, those graces that so abound in the doctrine of Christianity, and yet are so scarce in the lives of Christians? Where are they who look gladly on the good of others, and bear evils and injuries from their neighbours patiently, and repay evil with good? Thus it ought to be; but, on the contrary, how ready are the most to

part on the least occasions, to bite and snarl at each other! There is more still of the spirit of the dragon, than of the dove. My brethren, remember and consider, that the Gospel-light shines amongst us, and that more clearly than in former times, and more clearly than to most people in the world in these times; and do not outface and affront the blessed light with the accursed works of darkness. You might have been profane in former times, or in some other place, at a cheaper rate.

Know, that if this glorious light do not break off your course of sin, it will increase your load of judgment. The heaviest of all condemnations, is to live in darkness, and to live and die in it, in the midst of light. Amongst all your desperate accursed wishes, this shall be one, and a chief one, that either the Son of God had never come into the world, or that you had never heard of him.

Much of what we aim at, were gained, if Christians could be brought to consider who they are, and to walk like themselves: it would raise them above the base pleasures of sin, and the snares of the world. *The way of life is on high to the just:* there is a holy loftiness, a disdain of all impure sordid ways. It is said of Jehoshaphat, that *his heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord.* 2 Chron. xvii. 6. As a vain, self-conceited lifting up of the heart is the great enemy of our welfare; (as it is written of another, even of a good king, Hezekiah, *that his heart was lift up, therefore was wrath upon him;*) so there is a happy exaltation of the heart, when it is raised in God, to despise all communion with the unholy, and the unholy ways of the world. This, my brethren, is that which I would were wrought in you by the consideration of our holy calling. We are *called to holiness, and not to uncleanness.—Ye are the children of the light and of the day.* 1 Thess. iv. 7; v. 5. Base night ways, such as cannot endure the light, do not become you. O that comeliness which the saints should study, that *decorum* which they should keep in all their ways, *εὐσχημονως*, one action like another, and all like Christ, living as in the light. They that converse with the best company, such persons are obliged to more decency in apparel. We live in the light, in the company of angels of God, and Jesus Christ; and therefore should not act any thing that is low or mean, unbeseeming the rank we keep, and the presence of those with whom we associate. When the king passes through the country in progress, they who see him seldom, being either to attend him in his way, or to receive him into their houses, will labour to have all things in the best order they can for the time; but they that live at court, and are daily in the king's presence, are constantly court-like in their habit and carriage, and all about them. *O followers of the Lamb,* let your *garments* be always *white;* yea, let Him be your garment; clothe yourselves with Himself; have your robes made of his spotless fleece.

Put on the Lord Jesus. No resemblance is more usual than that of people's customs to their clothes, their habitudes to their habits. This the Apostle used in the foregoing words, *Put on the* [furniture, or] *armour of light,* having *cast off the works of darkness,* as clothes of darkness, night clothes. And the word, *walking decently,* has something of the same resemblance contained in it. And here we have the proper beauty and ornament of Christians, even the Lord Jesus, re-

commended to them under the same notion, *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Him we put on by faith, and are clothed with him as our righteousness. We come unto our Father in our Elder Brother's perfumed garments, and so obtain the blessing which he, in a manner, was stripped of for our sakes. He did undergo the curse, and *was made a curse* for our sakes: so the Apostle speaks of him, Gal. iii. 13. We *put him on*, as *the Lord our righteousness*, and are made *the righteousness of God in him.* This investiture is first, when our persons are made acceptable, and we come into court. But there is another putting of him on, in the conformity of holiness, which always accompanies the former; and that is it which is here meant. And this I declare unto you, that whosoever does not *thus* put him on, shall find themselves deceived in the other, if they imagine it belongs to them.

They who are the sons of God, and have the hope of inheriting with Christ, do really become like Him, are even heirs in some degree now; and that blessed expectation they have, is to be fully like him. 1 John iii. 3. *When he appears, we shall be like Him*, saith the Apostle. And in the mean while, they are endeavouring to be so, and somewhat attaining it; as he adds, *Every one that hath this hope, purifieth himself, as He is pure.* He is the only begotten Son, and we are so restored in him to the dignity of sons, that withal we are really changed into his likeness. He is the *Image of the Father* that is renewed upon us.

It is the substance of religion, to be like him whom we worship*. Man's end and perfection is *likeness to God.* But Oh, the distance, the unlikeness, yea, the contrariety, that is fallen upon our nature. *The carnal mind is enmity to God:* the soul is, as it were, become flesh, and so most unsuitable to the Father of Spirits; it is become like the beast that perishes. Now, to repair and raise us, this was the course taken: we could not rise up to God, He came down to us, yea into us, to raise and draw us up again to Him. He became like us, that we might become like Him. God first put on man, that man might put on God. Putting on the Lord Jesus, we put on man; but that man is God, and so, in putting on man, we put on God. Thus, putting on Christ, we put on all grace: we do this, not only by studying him as our copy and example, but by real participation of his Spirit; and that, so as that daily the likeness is growing, while we are carried by that Spirit to study his example, and enabled in some measure to conform to it; so that these two grow together, *growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* He is the *armour of light* before spoken of: all our ornament and safety is in him. Some pictures of great persons you have seen, with arms and robes on at once: thus we, when clothed with Christ, have our arms and robes both on at once, yea, both in one, for He is both. So this is the great study of a Christian, to eye and read Christ much, and, by looking on him, to become more and more like him, making the impression deeper by each day's meditation and beholding of him. His Spirit in us, and that love his Spirit works, make the work easy, as sympathies do. And still the more the change is wrought, it becomes still the more easy to work it. This is excellently described by this Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

* *Summa religionis imitari quem colis*

Now we see our business: Oh that we had hearts to it! It is high, it is sweet, to be growing more and more Christ-like every day. What is the purchase or conquest of kingdoms to this? Oh, what are we doing, who mind not this more? Even they whose proper work it is, how remiss are they in it, and what small progress do they make! Are we less for the world and ourselves, and more for God, this year than the former?—more meek and gentle, abler to bear wrongs, and to do good for them, more holy and spiritual in our thoughts and ways, more abundant and fervent in prayer? I know there will be times of deadness, and winter seasons, even in the souls of living Christians; but it is not always so, it will come about yet; so that, take the whole course of a Christian together, he is advancing, putting on still more of Christ, and living more in Him. There is a closer union betwixt the soul and this its spiritual clothing, than betwixt the body and its garments: that doth import a transformation into Christ, put on as a new life, or a new self. The Christian by faith doth this: he puts off himself, old carnal self, and instead thereof, puts on Jesus Christ, and thenceforward hath no more regard of that old self, than of old cast clothes, but is all for Christ, joys in nothing else. This is a mystery which cannot be understood but by partaking of it.

My brethren, learn to have these thoughts frequent and occurrent with you on all occasions. Think, when about any thing, how would Christ behave himself in this? Even so let me endeavour.

You will possibly say, they that speak thus, and advise thus, do not do thus. Oh, that that were not too true! Yet there be some that be sincere in it, and although it be but little that is attained, yet the very aim is excellent, and somewhat there is that is done by it. It is better to have such thoughts and desires, than altogether to give it up; and the very desire, being serious and sincere, does so much change the habitude and usage of the soul and life, that it is not to be despised.

Now follows, *And make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* And it will follow necessarily. We hear much to little purpose. Oh, to have the heart touched by the Spirit with such a word as is here! It would untie it from all these things. These are the words, the very reading of which wrought so with Augustine, that, of a licentious young man, he turned a holy faithful servant of Jesus Christ. While you were without Christ, you had no higher nor other business to do, than to attend and serve the flesh; but once having put Him on, you are other men, and other manners do become you. *Alia ætas alios mores postulat.*

This forbids not eating, and drinking, and clothing, and providing for these, nor decency and comeliness in them. The *putting on of Christ* does not bar the sober use of them: yea, the moderate providing for the necessities of the flesh, while thou art tied to dwell in it, that may be done in such a way as shall be a part of thy obedience and service to God. But to *lay in provisions for the lusts of it,* is to victual and furnish His enemy and thine own; for the *lusts of the flesh* do strive against God's Spirit, and war against thy soul. Gal. v. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 11.

This was the quarrel betwixt God and His own people in the wil-

derness. Bread for their *necessities*, He gave them, but they required meat for their *lusts*, (which should rather have been starved to death than fed,) and many of them fell in the quarrel. He gave them their desire, but gave them a plague with it, and they died with the meat between their teeth. Many who seem to follow God, and to have put on Christ, yet continuing in league with their lusts, and providing for them, they are permited awhile so to do, and are not withheld from their desire, and seem to prosper in the business; but, though not so sudden and sensible as that of the Israelites, there is no less certain a curse joined with all they purchase and provide for that unhallowed use. It is certainly the posture and employment of most of us, even who are called *Christians*, to be purveyors for the flesh, even for *the lusts of it;* (*ad supervacuum sudare;*) these lusts comprehending all sensual, and all worldly, fleshly, self-pleasing projects. Even some things that seem a little more decent and refined, come under this account. What are men commonly doing but projecting and labouring, beyond necessity, for fuller and finer provision for *back and belly*, and to feed their pride, and raise themselves and theirs somewhat above the condition of others about them? And where men's interests meet in the teeth, and cross each other, there arise heart-burnings and debates, and an evil eye one against another, even on fancied prejudice, where there is nothing but crossing a humour. So the grand idol is their own will, that must be provided for and served in all things, that takes them up early and late, how they may be at ease, and pleased, and esteemed, and honoured. This is the *making provision for the flesh and its lusts*, and from this are all they called who have *put on Christ;* not to a hard, mean, unpleasant life, instead of that other, but to a far more high and more truly pleasant life, that disgraces all those their former pursuits which they thought so gay while they knew no better. There is a transcendent sweetness in Christ, that puts the flesh out of credit. *Put on Christ*, thy robe royal, and *make no provision for the flesh;* surely thou wilt not then go and turmoil in the kitchen. A soul clothed with Christ, stooping to any sinful delight, or an ardent pursuit of any thing earthly, though lawful, doth wonderfully degrade itself. Methinks it is as a king's son in his princely apparel, playing the scullion, sitting down to turn the spits. A soul living in Christ indeed, hath no vacancy for the superfluous, luxurious demands of flesh, yea, supplies the very necessities of it with a kind of regret. *A necessitatibus meis libera me, Domine*, said one: *Deliver me, Lord from my necessities.*

Oh, raise up your spirits, you that pretend to any thing in Christ: delight in him, and let his love satisfy you at all times. What need you go a begging elsewhere? All you would add, makes you the poorer, abates so much of your enjoyment of him; and what can compensate that? *Put on the Lord Jesus*, and then view yourselves, and see if you be fit to be slaves to flesh and earth.

These two, *Put on the Lord Jesus*, and *Make no provision*, are directly the representation of the Church, Apoc. xii. A woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, needed borrow no beauty from it, or any thing under it. She left the scarlet and the purple, and the gold, to the harlot after spoken of, for her dressing.

The service of the flesh is a work the Christian cannot fold to, till he forgets what clothes he has on. This is all, my brethren. Oh that we could be once persuaded to *put on Christ*, and then resolve and remember to do nothing unbeseeming that attire!

SERMON XX.

Psal. cvii. 43.

Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

Most men live in a brutal sensitive life, live not so much as the life of reason; but far fewer the Divine life of faith, which is further above common reason than that is above sense. The spiritual light of Grace is that which makes day in the soul: all other wisdom is but night-light. *Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.* Eccl. ii. 13. This higher sort of knowledge is that the Prophet speaks of.

Having discoursed excellently through the Psalm, of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, so legible in His providence towards men, and often called up the dull minds of men to consider these His works, and bless Him for them, he closes with this applaudment of their happiness that truly do so, *Whoso is wise*, &c.

They that spake it, knew not how true their speech is, who have called the world *a nest of fools.* It is true, there is very little even of natural clearness of judgment amongst men, but surely far less of this true spiritual wisdom. So that if we read this as a question, *Whoso is wise?*—Oh, how few are there! And yet, most imagine they are; few are convinced they are fools, and that is the height of their folly. That word is most true, Job xi. 12; *Vain man would be wise, though he be born as the wild ass's colt.* In youth, he runs wild, unbroken, and unuseful; and in fuller age, hath but a brutish, slavish life, yokes in with beasts in the same kind of labour, or in little better; turmoiling and drudging to serve his base lusts, his gain, his pleasure, and forgets quite what high condition the soul that sparkles within him is born to, and made capable of. In a word, he knows not God. That is both his folly and his misery. How much of life passes ere we consider what we live for! And though all applied, how incapable are a great many to know any thing! *Inter homines quid homine rarius!* Among men what more rare than *man*, a truly rational being? To this purpose there is a notable word, Job xi. 8, 9.

Now, to stir up your desires and endeavours after this wisdom, consider, that it is the proper excellency of the rational nature, the true elevation of human nature, to be wise. And they that are not such, and know somewhat of their own defect, yet would willingly pass for such, and had rather be accounted uncomely, yea, even dishonest, than unwise; (call a man any thing rather than a fool;) but yet, if they could, would rather have the thing than the reputation of it, and desire really to be wise if it were in their power.

Now, it were good to work on this design within us, and to have it drawn into the right channel. Would you be wise? Then, seek true wisdom. What most men seek and admire in themselves and others, are but false shadows and appearances of wisdom; the knowledge either of base, low things, as to scrape and gather together, or else of vain, unprofitable things, and such knowledge as is for the most part but imaginary. For most things in state-affairs take another bias and course, are not so much modelled by wit, as most men imagine. And for the secrets of nature, we have little certain knowledge of them. How short is our life to attain any knowledge! That is an excellent word, Job viii. 9. But the knowledge here set before us, is the best kind of knowledge, that of the highest things, Divine things. I say, the best kind of knowledge of them, for there are notions even of these things, that have little in them; either curious, fruitless disputations of such points as are most removed both from our notice and our use, or a useless knowledge of useful things. But this is a well-regulated and sure-footed knowledge of Divine things, as God himself hath revealed them.

This wisdom descends from above; therefore, for the attainment of it, these two things are necessary: 1st, To know that we want it, sensibly and feelingly to know this, that we know nothing of the things of God. *Multi ad sapientiam pervenirent, nisi se jamjam pervenisse arbitrarentur: Many men would have attained to wisdom, if they had not fancied or imagined that they had already attained it.* I speak not now of the lowest sort, the grossly, the brutishly ignorant even of the letter of Divine truths, but such as can give themselves or others, if put to it, a good account of the principles of faith and holiness, have read and heard much, and possibly learned and retained not a little that way, yet still are but ignorants, strangers to this heavenly wisdom. Therefore men must first know this, that they must go anew to school again, and become as little children. Wisdom invites no other. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.* Prov. ix. 4. The *strange woman*, and so, all the enticements to sin, they invite the same persons, (ver. 16.) but to a directly opposite end: she calls the fools to befool them, to drown them in folly and wretchedness; but Wisdom calls them, to unbefool them, to recover them and teach them the way of life.

2dly. Being convinced and sensible of the want of it, to use the right way to attain it, to give all diligent attendance on the word and ordinances of God, to desire it of Him. Desire is all: if you desire much, you shall have much. Vent thy desire this way Heavenwards, whence this wisdom descends. This light springs from on high. Man cannot raise himself to it without Another. James i. 5. *If any man lack wisdom,*—if he is but once sensible of that, why then the sweetest, easiest way to attain it that can be desired, is pointed out,—*let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not;* does neither harshly refuse, nor upbraidingly give it, but delights to give it to them that ask it, even His own Holy Spirit, the spring of this wisdom, as he hath promised.

We are all too little in this humble seeking and begging of this Divine knowledge, and that is the cause we are so shallow and small

proficients. *If thou cry, and lift up thy voice for understanding, if thou search for it as for hid treasures.* Prov. ii. 3. Sit down upon thy knees and dig for it; that is the best posture to fall right upon the golden vein, and go deepest to know the mind of God, in searching the Scriptures, to be directed and regulated in His ways, to be made skilful in ways of honouring Him and doing Him service. This, neither men nor angels can teach him, but God alone. *For the Lord giveth wisdom.* Ver. 6.

Of this wisdom we have here the *character* and the *privilege.*

I. The *character: Whoso will observe these things.* That looks back to the doctrine of the Psalmist, which is very divinely sweet. He had been extolling the goodness of God in general, in His dealings with men, and instancing in divers occurrent and remarkable particulars, the fitness and mildness of His chastisements, the seasonableness and sweetness of His deliverances, as correcting us for our greater good, and relieving us in our greatest need, when we are nearest despairing of relief. This is exemplified in travellers and prisoners, in sick men and seamen, and in the various disposal of the state of all sorts of persons, the highest and the meanest; and the repeated sweet burden of the song is, *O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!* And in the end, he declares the result of all, ver. 42, the joy of the godly, the shame and silencing of the wicked, who usually either mistake, or slight, or despise the providence of God in the rule of human affairs, who readily speak big their own thoughts, which are vain, promising themselves continual success. In the end He shall clear Himself, and gladden the souls of His people, and clothe His enemies with shame. Wait a while, and thus it shall be; they shall change places. *He pours contempt upon princes,* and *sets the poor on high from affliction,* and so rights Himself and them that wait on Him. Then *the righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.* And it is a great point of true wisdom, rightly to observe these things.

This observing hath in it, first a believing notice of these things, to take such instances aright, when they meet our eye, to know these things to be indeed the Lord's doings; and so, when we are in any present strait, to believe, accordingly, the same inspection of His eye, and secret conduct of His hand, to be in all. Now, it is a great point to have the heart established in these persuasions. We are generally much defective in this, and they most who least suspect themselves of it. But withal, the observing or *keeping* of these things, (so the word is,) this firm believing, hath in it these two following on it, and flowing from it, *serious contemplation* and *suitable action.*

1. To observe these things, is often to turn our eye to the view of these things, and to keep it on them, so as to have our hearts warmed with them, to be deeply taken with wonder and love. But alas! our souls are drowned in flesh, dragged down from things that become them, and are worthy of them, to drudge and weary themselves in the mire and clay. How few are there who make it a great part of their daily business to behold God in His works and ways with themselves and others! Some, in respect of others, are called *great spirits;*

but Oh, what are they? What a poor greatness is it to project, for a great estate, or great places and titles, or to conceive great revenges of little wrongs! There is something, even in nature, of greatness of spirit, very far beyond the bastard, false character that most take of it, and that is above most things others imagine great, and despises them. But true greatness is this, to have a mind much taken up with the greatness of God, admiring and adoring Him, and exciting others to do so; grieved, and holily angry, that men regard Him so little, breathing forth such wishes as these of the Psalmist, both to express their own thoughts, and to awake sleeping besotted men about them, *O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness*, &c. They could wish a voice that could reach many thousands; and if they had one audible to all the world, would use it no otherwise than to be precentors of the praises of God, to call up and begin the song, *O that men would praise*, &c.

Consider yourselves, my brethren, and trace yourselves into your own hearts, whether often in the day your thoughts run this way, finding the meditation of God sweet to you, or whether they do not run out much more to vain things, and are seldom here; either hurried and busied in a surcharge of affairs, or, if vacant, yet spinning themselves out in frothy, foolish fancies, that you would be ashamed to look back upon. You might entertain Divine and heavenly thoughts, even while about your earthly employments and refreshments; but this is little known and little sought after. Make it your business to learn more of this wisdom. Call in your hearts, commune often with yourselves and with God; be less abroad, and more within, and more above. It is by far the sweetest life. Beg of God to wind up your hearts, when you find them heavy and dull, that they follow you slowly in this, and need much pulling and hauling from your hand: a touch from His hand will make them mount up easily and nimbly. Oh! seek His drawing: *Draw me, I will run after Thee.* And when you meet together, let this be your business, to speak of Him who alone is to be exalted, who doth and disposeth all as He pleases. Say to friends, and kindred, and neighbours, Oh, how great and how gracious a God have we! Oh, that we could bless Him!

2. To keep these things, is, to walk according to the firm belief and frequent thoughts of them; to fear Him, and to walk humbly and warily, because our follies draw on His rods, and to study to please Him, and no matter who be displeased; and when he corrects, to fall down humbly under His hand, who hath our sickness and health, our life and death, and all that concerns us, in His absolute power. If any thing advance or advantage us before others, endeavour to be the more lowly and serviceable to Him. If in a low condition, still bless and reverence Him, for His presence will turn the meanest cottage, yea, the darkest dungeon, into a palace.

The chief delight of the saints, is, to offer praises to God, to gather them in from all His works, to send up to Him. And His chief delight in all His works, is to receive these praises of them from their hands: they articulate them, make a reasonable sacrifice of them. Psal. cxlv. 10. *All Thy works shall praise Thee, and Thy saints shall bless Thee.* We are called to this high work, yet lie behind, and most un-

worthily and foolishly debase ourselves in other things. But they that are wise, if there be any, will mind this, will not let the Lord's marvellous and gracious doings pass without notice.

II. The *privilege* of this wisdom. It is a high proof of His love to us, that He loves to be seen working by us, and stoops to take our acclamations and approbation, hath such regard to them, and rewards them so richly, even thus; *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* Observe, *They that are wise, and observe, shall understand* further. *To him that hath, shall be given;* to him that *usefully hath.* That is *to have*, and so it is there meant;—to him that improves it to His advantage who gave it. The greatest difficulty is to begin: as one said of his growing rich. "That he came hardly by a little riches, and easily by great riches." Having once got a stock, he grew rich apace. So once taking, be it but the first lessons of this wisdom, learning these well, shall facilitate thy knowledge exceedingly. *The wise increaseth learning.* Prov. i. 5. Wouldst thou but receive and hearken to the easiest things represented by God, these would enlighten and enlarge thy soul to receive more; especially, walking by the light thou hast, be it ever so little, that invites and draws in more. Be diligent in the practice of what you know, if you would know more. Believe it, that is the way to grow. *Whoso observes*, keeps these things, acts according to the knowledge of them, (as John vii. 17) *he shall understand*, shall understand it by finding it. *They shall understand it in themselves;* (the word is in the reciprocal mood, *Hithpahel*;) it shall be particularly and effectually shewn unto them; they shall experience it, and so understand it, and that is the only lively understanding of it. Men may hear, yea, deliver large discourses of it, and yet not understand the thing. Happy are they to whom this is given! *Solus docet qui dat, et discit qui recipit:* He alone teaches, who gives, and he learns who receives.

Loving kindness. (Heb. *graciousness*). All sorts of kindnesses, even outward and common mercies, in those shall he understand His goodness: in recoveries and deliverances from dangers, and temporal blessings, be their portion in them less or more, though the things be common, yet they come to be his own by a particular stamp of love, which to others they have not. And the children of God know it, they can find it out, and can read it, though the world that looks on it cannot. And indeed, to them, the lowest things are disposed of, in order to the highest: their daily bread is given them by that same love that gives them Christ: all is given in Him. So the curse is taken away, and all is sweetened with a blessing. *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the abundance of the wicked.*

But the things they chiefly prize and desire, as indeed they deserve so to be, are of another sort: in their very being and nature, are love-tokens, effects of that peculiar free-grace that chose them to life. And this is called the *light of God's countenance. His everlasting love.* Now *they that are wise, and observe these things, they shall understand* this *loving-kindness.* Not that they first are thus *wise*, before they partake of this loving-kindness; no; by it this *wisdom* was given them; but this promise is made to their improvement of that gift, and walking in those ways of *wisdom.* Not only are they loved of God, but

they shall *understand* it. He will manifest Himself to them, and tell them He loves them. And the more they walk in these ways, the more clearly shall they perceive and powerfully find His love manifested to them.

This is the highest inducement that can be to such as have any interest in it. When this love hath but once touched them, though as yet they know it not certainly, yet it works that esteem and affection that nothing can be admitted into comparison with it. While carnal men wallow in the puddle, these are the crystal streams a renewed soul desires to bathe in, even the love of God. O! let me find that; no matter what I have, or what I want. In poverty, or any distressed, forsaken condition, one good word or good look from Him, makes me up. I can sit down content and cheerful, and rejoice in that, though all the world frown on me, and all things look dark and comfortless about me, that is a piece of Heaven within the soul. Now, of this experimental, understanding knowledge of this love, there are different degrees; there is a great latitude in this. To some are afforded, at some times, little glimpses and inlets of it in a more immediate way; but these stay not: *suavis hora, sed brevis mora.* Others are upheld in the belief of it, and live on it by faith: though it shine not so clear, yet, a light they have to walk by. Though the sun shines not bright out to them all their life, yet, they are led home, and understand so much love in their way, as shall bring them to the fulness of it in the end. Others, having passed most of the day, have a fair glimpse in the very evening or close of it. But, howsoever, they that walk in this way by this light, whatsoever measure they have of it, are led by it to the land of light. The connexion here made, you see, *They that wisely observe these things, shall understand this loving-kindness.* A wise man observing of God's ways, and ordering our own to His mind, is the certain way to attain much experienced knowledge of his love.

This love is most free, and, from the beginning to the end, works of itself; but in the method of it, God hath thus linked things together, made one portion of grace, in the use of it, draw on another. And this His children should prudently consider. There is such a like speech, Psal. l. 23. *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

The *contemplation* of God in His works, sets the soul open to receive the influences of this love: by looking towards Him, it draws His eye towards it, as one look of love draws on another. Certainly, many that have some desire of the light of God's countenance, and evidences of His love, yet, in not applying their souls to consider Him, do much injure themselves.

Heavenly thoughts do refine the soul, as fire works itself higher and to a purer flame by stirring. To be blessing God for His goodness, giving Him praise in the view of His works in the world, and for His church, and particularly for ourselves, this both disposes the heart to a more suitable temper for receiving divine comforts, and invites Him to let them flow into it. For if He have such acknowledgments for general goodness and common mercies, how much larger returns shall He have upon the discoveries of special love! Is it a sight of God as reconciled, thou wouldst have? Now, praise sets a man amongst the angels, and they behold His face.

Again, *action*, walking in His ways humbly and carefully, and so waiting, never wants a successful return of much love. How can He who is goodness itself, hide and reserve Himself from a soul that yields up itself to Him, hath no delight but to please Him, hates and avoids what may offend Him? This, surely, is the way, if there is any under Heaven, to enjoy communion with Him.

They that forget Him, and disregard their ways, and are no way careful to order them to His liking, do but delude themselves with mistaken fancies of mercy. I beseech you, be warned. There cannot be solid peace in the ways of sin: *no peace to the wicked, saith my God.* Outward common favours you may share for a time; but these have a curse with them to you, and you shall quickly be at an end of these receipts; and then you would look towards Him for some persuasions of His loving-kindness, but are likely to find nothing but frowns and displeasure. O! *consider this, ye that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

Even they who have some title to this love of God, and are desiring further evidence of it, yet, do often sit exceedingly in their own light, and work against their end, still bent on that assurance they would have, and yet neglecting the way to it, which certainly is in a manner to neglect itself. Were they more busied in honouring God, doing Him what service they can in their station, striving against sin, acknowledging His goodness to the world, and even to themselves, that they are yet in the region of hope, not cut off in their iniquities, thus *offering praise*, and *ordering their conversation aright*, submitting unto Him, and giving Him glory; their assurances and comforts, in the measure He thinks fit, would come in due time, and sooner in this way than in any other they could take.

Observe these things, beware of sin, and *ye shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* It is true, this love of God changes not, nor hangs on thy carriage, nor on any thing without itself; yea, all our good hangs on it: but know, as to the knowledge and apprehension of it, it depends much on the holy frame of thy heart and the exact regulation of thy ways. Sin obstructs and darkens all; those are the clouds and mists; and where any believer is adventurous on the ways of sin, he shall smart for it. Where sin is, there will be a storm, as Chrysostom's word is of Joshua*. The experience of all witnesseth this. No strength of faith will keep out floods of doubting and troublous thoughts, where any novel sin hath opened a gap for them to rush in by. See David, Psalm li., expressing himself as if all were to begin again, his joy taken away, and his bones broken, and to sense all undone: nothing will serve but a *new creature. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

There is a congruity in the thing itself, and God hath so ordered it, that vexation and anguish should still attend sin, and the ways of holiness be ways of peace. Say men what they will, great falls leave wounds and smart behind them, and they must be washed with sharper liquor before balm and oil be poured into them. And not only will more notorious breaches disturb thy peace, but a tract of careless

* Ὅπου ἁμαρτία ἐκεῖ χειμών.

and fruitless walking. If thou abate of thy attendance on God, and thy fear cool towards Him, lagging and falling downwards to something you are caring for and taken with, you shall find an estrangement: it may be insensible at first and for a while because of thy sloth, that thou dost not observe diligently how it is with thee; but, after a time, it shall be more easily known, but more hardly mended. And there are none of us but might find much more of God in this our way homewards, if the foolishness and wanderings of our hearts did not prevent us.

Be persuaded, then, you whose hearts He hath wrought for Himself, to attend better on him, and the advantage shall be yours, doubt it not. And though for a time you find it not, yet wait on, and go on in that way; it shall not disappoint you. The more you let go of the false, vain comforts of the world for His sake, the more richly you shall be furnished with His. Oh! we make not room for them; that is the great hinderance. Consider Him, behold His works, bless Him, confess Him always worthy of *praise for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men*, however He deal with thee in particular; and assuredly, He shall deal graciously with thee, and ere long thou shalt find it, and be forced to acknowledge it. Though it may be thou want these bright shinings of comforts thou wouldst have, yet, looking to Him, and walking before Him, *observing these things*, thou shalt have of His light to lead thee on, and a calm within; sweet peace, not that height of joy thou desirest.

There are often calm, fair days without storm, though it be not so clear sun-shine; and in such days a man may travel comfortably. I would have Christians called off from a perplexed over-pressing of this point of their particular assurance. If we were more studious to please Him, forgetting ourselves, we should find Him remember us the more; yet, we should not do so for this neither, but simply for Himself. In a word, this is thy wisdom; mind thy duty, and refer to Him thy comfort.

SERMON XXI.

Psal. cxix. 96.

I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Grace is a Divine light in the soul, and shows the true colours of things. The Apostle overshoots not when he says, *The spiritual man judgeth all things.* He hath undeniably the advantage: he may judge of natural things, but the natural man cannot judge of spiritual things. Yea, the truest judgment of natural things, in respect to our chiefest end, springs particularly from spiritual wisdom: that makes the true parallel of things, and gives a just account of their differences, as here,

I have seen an end, &c.] All that have any measure of spiritual light, are of this mind; but certainly, they that are more eminently blessed with it, have a more high and clearer view of both parts. David, who is generally, and with greatest likelihood, supposed to be the author of

this Psalm, was singularly advantaged to make this judgment of things. He had, no doubt, a large measure of the knowledge of God and of His law, which here he declares to be so large; and being both a wise and a great man, might know more than most others, even of all other perfections—might trace them to their utmost, and see their *end*, as he expresses it. This same verdict we have from his son Solomon, after much experience in all things; who, having the advantage of peace and riches, did particularly set himself to this work, to a most exact inquiry after all things of this earth. He set nature on the rack, to confess its utmost strength for the delighting and satisfying of man; with much pains and art he extracted the very spirit of all, and after all, he gives the same judgment we have here; his book writ on that subject, being a paraphrase on this sentence, dilating the sense, and confirming the truth of it. It carries its own sum in those two words which begin and end it; the one, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*, and the other, *Fear God and keep His commandments, for that is the whole duty of man.* And these here are just the equivalent of those two; the former of that beginning word, *I have seen an end of all perfection;* and the latter of that concluding one, *But Thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

When mean men speak of this world's greatness, and poor men cry down riches, it passes but for a querulous, peevish humour, to discredit things they cannot reach, or else an ignorant contempt of things they do not understand; or, taking it a little further, but a self-pleasing shift, a willingly undervaluing of those things of purpose to allay the displeasure of the want of them; or at the best, if something of truth and goodness be in the opinion, yet, that the assent of such persons is, (like the temperance of sickly bodies,) rather a virtue made of necessity, than embraced of free choice. But to hear a wise man, in the height of these advantages, proclaim their vanity, yea, kings from the very thrones whereon they sit in their royal robes, give forth this sentence upon all the glories and delights about them, is certainly above all exception. Here are two, the father and the son; the one raised from a mean condition to the crown, instead of a shepherd's staff, to wield a sceptre, and that, after many afflictions and dangers in the way to it, which, to some palates, gives a higher relish and sweetness to honour, than if it had slid on them before they could feel it, in the cheap, easy way of an undoubted succession. Or, if any think David's best days a little cloudy, by the remains of insurrections and oppositions, in that case usual; as the jumbling of the water is not fully quieted for a while after the same is over; then, take the son, succeeding to as fair a day as heart can wish, both a complete calm of peace, and a bright sunshine of riches and regal pomp, and he able to improve these to the highest. And yet, both these are perfectly of the same mind in this great point. The son having peace and time for it, though a king, would make his throne a pulpit, and be a preacher of this one doctrine, to which the father's sentence is the fittest text I have seen.

The words give an account of a double prospect; the latter being, as it were, the discovery of a new world after the travelling over the old, expressed in the former clause: *I have seen an end of all perfection*, i. e., taken an exact view of all other things, and seen their end;

but Thy commandment is of exceeding extent and perfection, and I see but a part, and there is no end of it.

I have seen an end.] I have tried and made experiment of much of what this world affords, and the rest I see to the uttermost of it, how far it reaches. The Psalmist, as standing on a vantage ground, sees clearly round about him the furthest horizon of earthly excellencies and advantages, and finds them not to be infinite or unmeasurable; sees that they are bounded, yea, what their bounds are, how far they go at their very farthest, *an end of all*, even of perfection. And this is in effect what I find, that their end stops short of satisfaction. A man may think and desire beyond them, yea, not only *may*, but *must*: he cannot be terminated by their bounds, will still have a stretch further, and feels them leave him, and then finds a void. All which he says most ponderously in these short words, giving the world the slight thus: It is not so great a matter as men imagine it; the best of it I have examined, and considered it to the full, taken the whole dimension: all the profits and pleasures under the sun, their utmost goes but a short way; the soul is vaster than all, can look and go much farther.

I will not attempt the particulars, to reckon all, or be large in any: the Preacher, Solomon, hath done this matchlessly, and *who is he that can come after the king?* If any be sick of that poor disease, esteem of riches, he can tell you the utmost of these, that *when they increase, they are increased that eat them, and what good is to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?* Eccl. v. 11. Yea, looking them up, and not using them, and still gathering, and all to no use, this is a madness: it is all one as if they were still in the mines under the ground, and the difference none, but in turmoiling pains in gathering, and tormenting care in keeping. But take the best view of them, supposing that they be used, that is, spent on family and retinue, why then, what hath the owner but the sight of them for himself? Out of all his dishes, he fills but one belly. Of all his fair houses and richly-furnished rooms, he lodges but in one at once. And if his great rent be needful for his great train or any other ways of expense, is it an advantage to need much? Or is he not rather poorer who needs five or six thousand pounds by year, than he that needs but one hundred?

Of all the festivities of the world and delights of sense, the result is, *laughter is mad;* and mirth, and orchards, and music, these things pass away as a dream, and are still to begin again. And so gross and earthly are they, that for the beasts they may be a fit good, but for the divine, immortal soul, they cannot. A horse lying at ease in a fat pasture, may be compared with those that take delight in them.

Honour and esteem are yet vainer than those pleasures and riches that furnish them. Though they be nothing but wind, compared to solid soul-delights, yet, as to nature, there is in them somewhat more real than in the fame of honour; which is no more, indeed, than an airy, imaginary thing, and hangs more on others than any thing else, and not only on persons above them, but even those below; especially that kind which the vanity of man is much taken with, all popular opinion, than which there is nothing more light and poor, and that is more despised by the elevated sort of natural spirits, a thing as unworthy as it is inconstant. No slavery like the affecting of vulgar

esteem; it enthrals the mind to all sorts. Often the worthiest share least in it. See Eccl. ix. 11—15. True worth is but sometimes honoured, but always envied. Eccl. iv. 4, *Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour.* And with whomsoever it is thou seekest to be esteemed, be it with the multitude, or more chiefly with the wiser and better sort, what a narrow thing is it at largest! How many nations know neither thee nor those who know thee!

Beyond all these things is inward worth, and even that natural wisdom, such as some minds have to a far more refined height than others. A man by it sees round about him, yea, and within himself. That Solomon grants to be an excellent thing, Eccl. iv., yet, presently finds the end of that perfection, ver. 16. That guards not from disasters and vexations; yea, there is in it an innate grief, amidst so many follies. Eccl. i. 18. *In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* Yea, give a man the confluence of all these, which is so rare, make him at once rich, and honourable, and healthful, and encompassed with all the delights of nature and art, and wise to make the best improvement of all they can well afford, (and there is much in that,) yet, there *is an end of all these perfections.* For there is quickly an end of himself who hath them: he dies, and that spoils all. Death breaks the strings, and that ends the music. And the highest of natural wisdom, which is the soul of all nature's advantages, that ends them, whether practical or political. In that day are all state projects and high thoughts laid low, if speculative. For, in spite of all sciences and knowledge of nature, a man goes out in the dark; and if thou art learned in many languages, one death silences all thy tongues at once. So says Solomon, Eccl. ii. 16, *And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.* Yea, suppose a man were not broken off, but continued still in the top of all these perfections; yea, imagine much more, the chiefest delights of sense that have ever been found out, more solid and certain knowledge of nature's secrets, all moral composure of spirit, the highest dominion, not only over men, but a deputed command over nature's frame, the course of all the heavens, and the affairs of all the earth,and that he was to abide in this estate; yet would he see *an end of this perfection*, that is, it would come short of making him happy. It is an union with a Higher Good by that love that subjects all things to Him, that alone is the endless perfection: *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

You may think this a beaten subject, and possibly, that some other cases or questions were fitter for Christians. I wish it were more needless. But Oh, the deceitfulness of our hearts! Even such as have shut out the vanities of this world at the fore-gate, let them in again, or some part of them at least, at the postern. Few hearts clearly come off untied from all, but are still lagging after somewhat; and thence so little delight in God, in prayer and holy things. And though there be no fixed esteem of other things, yet that indisposition to holy ways, argues some sickly humour latent in the soul; and therefore this is almost generally needful, that men be called to consider what they seek after. Amidst all thy pursuits, stop and ask thy soul, For what end is all this? At what do I aim? For surely, by

men's heat in these lower things, and their cold indifference for Heaven, it would seem we take our portion to be here. But, Oh, miserable portion at the best! Oh, short-lived happiness! Look on them, and learn to see this, the *end of all perfections*, and to have an eye beyond them, till your hearts be well weaned from all things under the sun. Oh! there is little acquaintance with the things that are above it, little love of them, still some pretensions, some hopes that flatter us,—"I will attain this or that; and then"—Then what? What if *this night, thou fool, thy soul shall be required of thee?*

But Thy commandment.] The former part of this sentence hath within every man's breast somewhat to suit with it and own it. Readily, each man according to his experience and the capacity of his soul, hath his sense, if awake, of the unsatisfactoriness of all this world. Give him what thou wilt, yet, still there is empty room within, and a pain in that emptiness, and so, vexation, a tormenting windiness in all. And men of more contemplative minds have higher and clearer thoughts of this argument and matter, and may rise to a very high moral contempt of the world; and some of them have done so. But this other part is more sublime, and peculiar to a Divine illumination. That which we find not *without*, we would have *within*, and would work out of ourselves what cannot be extracted from things about us. Philosophy is much set on this, but it is upon a false scent, and so still deluded. No, it *is* without us; not within us, but above us. That fulness is in God, and there is no communion with Him, or enjoyment of Him, but in the way of his commandment. Therefore, this is the discovery that answers and satisfies, *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

Commandment.] He speaks of all as one, I conceive, for that tie and connexion of them all, on account of which he that breaks one, is guilty of all. A rule they are, and are so one, as a rule must be. One authority runs through all: that is the golden thread they are strung on. Break that any where, and all the pearls drop off. Psal. cxix. 6: *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all Thy commandments.* Otherwise, one piece shames another, like uneven and incongruous ways. The legs of the lame not being even, make an unseemly going. And as it is here, so a plural word is joined with the singular, ver. 137, and Psal. cxxxii*. And it is fitly here spoken of as *one*, opposed to all varieties and multitudes of things beside. *Thy commandment*, each linked to one another, and that one chain reaches beyond all the incoherent perfections in the world, if one were added to another, and drawn to a length. This *commandment is exceeding broad;* the very *breadth* immense, and therefore the *length* must be much more so, no end of it. That good to which it leads and joins the soul, is enough for it: it is complete and full in its nature, and endless in its continuance, so that there is no measuring, no end of it any way. But all other *perfections* have their bounds of being, and period of duration, so that each way an end is to be found of them.

* Deum tradunt Hebræi, unâ voce, eloquio uno, *hoc est*, uno spiritu et halitu, sine ullâ interspiratione, morâ, pausâ, vel distinctione, ita ut omnia verba, tanquam verbum unum, et vox una, fuerant, elocutum. Atque hinc volunt duplicem illam accentuum rationem in Decalogo ortam, ut altera una, illa Dei continuata elocutio, altera hominum tarda et distincta, judicetur.

Now, in this, the opposition is the more admirable, that he speaks not expressly of the enjoyment of God, but of the commandment of God: he extols that above all the perfections of the world. Which is much to be remarked, as having in it a clear character of the purest and highest love. It had been more obvious to all, had he said, I have seen the utmost of all besides Thee, but Thou, O God, the light of Thy countenance, the blessed vision of Thy face, that alone is boundless and endless happiness. Or, to have taken it below the full perfect enjoyment of glory, but some glances let into the soul here, a comfortable word from God, a look of love, Oh, how far surpassing all the continued caresses and delights of the world! He speaks not of that neither, but, *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.* As the Apostle says, *The foolishness of God is wiser than men's wisdom,* 1 Cor. i. 25, so here, that of God which seems lowest and hardest, is infinitely beyond whatsoever is highest and sweetest in the world. The obeying of His commands, His very service, is more profitable than the world's rewards; His commands more excellent than the perfection of the world's enjoyments. To be subject to Him, is truer happiness than to command the whole world. Pure love reckons thus: Though no further reward were to follow obedience to God, the perfection of His creature and its very happiness, carries its full recompense in its own bosom. Yea, love delights most in the hardest services. It is self-love, to love the embraces and rest of love; but it is love to Him indeed, to love the labour of love, and the service of it, and that, not so much because it leads to rest, and ends in it, but because it is service to Him whom we love. Yea, that labour is in itself a rest, it is so natural and sweet to a soul that loves. As the revolution of the heavens, which is a motion in rest, and rest in motion, changes not place, though running still; so, the motion of love is truly Heavenly, and circular still in God, beginning in Him, and ending in Him, and so, not ending, but still moving without weariness.

Let us see what the commandment is, and that will clear it, for it is nothing but love. All is in that one, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,* &c. So, the *command* that is here called so broad, is *love.* There is no measuring that, for its object is immeasurable. We readily exceed in the love of any other thing; but in the love of God, there is no danger of exceeding. Its true measure is, to know no measure.

According as the love is, so is the soul: it is made like to, yea, it is made one with, that which it loves. *Si terram amas, terra es; si Deum amas, quid vis ut dicam, Deus es?* [AUGUSTINE.] By loving gross, base things, it becomes gross, and turns to flesh, or earth; and so, by the love of God, it is made divine, is one with Him. So this is the excellency of the command enjoining love. God hath a good-will to all His creatures; but that He should make a creature capable of loving Him, and appoint this for His command, Oh! herein His goodness shines brightest. Now, though fallen from this, we are again invited to it; though degenerated and accursed in our sinful nature, yet we are renewed in Christ, and this command is renewed in him, and a new way of fulfilling it is pointed out.

This *command is broad.* There is room enough for the soul in

God, that is hampered and pinched in all other things. Here, *love with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.* Stretch it to the utmost; there is enough for it here, while it must contract and draw itself to other things. *I will walk at liberty,* says David, *for I seek Thy precepts.* That which perverse nature judges thraldom, once truly known, is only freedom. This is because the law is love, and such a love as brings full content to the soul. Man hath not an object of love besides God,—too many he hath that can torment and trouble him, but not one that by being loved by him, satisfies and quiets him. Whether he loves things without him, or himself, still he is pained and restless. All other things he loves naturally, in reference to himself: but himself is not a sufficient object for him. It must be something that adds to, and perfects his nature, to which he must be united in love; somewhat higher than himself, yea, the highest of all, the Father of Spirits. That alone completes a spirit and blesses it, to love Him, the Spring of spirits.

Now this love, as including obedience to His commands, is a thing in itself due, and expressly commanded too. This is the thing which surpasseth all pursuits and all enjoyments under heaven, not only to be loved of God, but to love Him. Yea, could these be severed, this rather would be the deformity and misery of the creature, to hate Him: this is the hell of hell.

And to love Him, not only with complacency, a desire to enjoy Him, but, moreover, wishing Him glory, doing Him service, desiring He may be honoured by all His creatures, and endavouring ourselves to honour Him, that is our work; applauding the praises of angels and all creatures, and adding ours, (as Psal. ciii. 22,) sweet, willing, entire submission to His will, ready to do, to suffer any thing for Him. Oh! away all base, muddy pleasures, all false night-shows of earthly glories, all high attempts and heroic virtues! These have their measure and their close, and prove in the end but lies. This command, this love alone, is the endless perfection and delight of souls, which begins here, and is completed above. The happiness of glory is, the perfection of holiness: that is the full beauty and loveliness of the Spouse, the Lamb's wife.

Oh! how much are the multitudes of men to be pitied, who are hunting they know not what, still pursuing content, and it still flying before, and they at as great a distance as when they promised themselves to lay hold on it! It is strange what men are doing. *Ephraim feedeth on the wind.* Hos. xii. 1. The most serious designs of men are more foolish than the play of children; all the difference is, that these are *tristes ineptiæ*, sourer and more sad trifles.

Oh, that ye would turn this way, and not still lay out your *money for that which is not bread!* You would find the saddest part of a spiritual course of life hath under it more true sweetness than all your empty mirths, which sound much, and are nothing, like the *crackling of thorns under the pot.* There is more joy in enduring a cross for God, than in the smiles of the world; in a private, despised affliction, without the name of suffering for His cause, or any thing in it like martyrdom, but only as coming from His hand, kissing it, and bearing it patiently, yea, gladly for His sake, out of love to Him because

it is His will so to try thee. What can come amiss to a soul thus composed?

I wish that even they who have renounced the vain world, and have the face of their hearts turned Godwards, would learn more this happy life and enjoy it more, not to hang so much upon sensible comforts, as to delight in obedience, and to wait for those at His pleasure, whether He gives much or little, any or none. Learn to be still finding the sweetness of His commands, which no outward or inward change can disrelish, rejoicing in the actings of that Divine love within thee. Continue thy conflicts with sin, and though thou mayest at times be foiled, yet, cry to Him for help, and getting up, redouble thy hatred of it and attempts against it. Still stir this flame of God. That will overcome: *Many waters cannot quench it.* It is a renewed pleasure, to be offering up thyself every day to God. Oh! the sweetest life in the world, is, to be crossing thyself, to please Him; trampling on thy own will, to follow His.

SERMON XXII.

HABAKKUK iii. 17, 18.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

MOST men's industries and employments are chiefly without them, but certainly our main and worthiest business lies within us; nor is ever a man fit for the varieties and vicissitudes of time and affairs without, till he have taken some pains to some good purpose within himself. A distempered, discomposed mind is as a limb out of joint, which is fit for no action, and moves both deformedly and painfully. That which we have to do, my brethren, for which these our meetings are commanded of God, and should be attended by us, and which we should follow out when we are gone from hence, is this, the reducing of our souls to God. Their disunion from Him is their disjointing, and they are never right till they refix on Him; and being there, they are so right, that nothing can come wrong to them. As they are not readily ensnared with ease and plenty, so, neither are they lightly astonished with want and trouble, but, in the ebb of all other comforts, they can hold the Prophet's purpose, to *joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of their salvation.*

This, we may hear and speak of, but truly, few attain it. I fear, many of us are not so much as seeking after it and aspiring to it. A soul really conversant with God, is taken up with Him, all its affections work and move towards Him, as the Prophet's here; his *fear*, his *joy*, his *trust*, ver. 16—19. This is a prayer, as it is entitled, but it is both a prophetical and an unusual one; a *prophecy* and a *song* (as the word added imports) *of Habakkuk the prophet on Neginoth.* The strain of it is high, and full of sudden raptures and changes as that word signifies; as here, having expressed much fear in the foregoing

words, a shivering, trembling horror, he yet adds such a height of an invincible kind of joy,—like the needle of the compass, fixedly looking towards Him, yet, not without a trembling motion. Thus, we have the temper of the Psalmist, Psal. ii. 11: *Rejoice with trembling.* Which suits well to so sublime an object; joying in God, because He is *good*, yet with joy still mixed with holy awe, because He is *great*. And this especially in a time of great judgments, or in the lively apprehensions or representations of them, whether before or after their inflicting; whether they be on the people of God for their iniquities, or on the enemies of God for their oppressions and cruelties to His people while he made them instruments for their correction. In both, God is formidable, and *greatly to be feared*, even by those that are nearest to Him. This we find in the prophets when seeing judgments afar off, long before their day, which they had commission to denounce. So, this prophet here not only discovers great awe and fear at what he saw and foretold concerning God's own people, the Jews, but at the after-reckoning with the Chaldeans, His and their enemies. When God comes to do judgment on the wicked, this will make them who stand by and suffer not with them, yet to tremble; yea, such as are advantaged by it, as usually the people of God are, their enemies' ruin proving their deliverance. The majesty and greatness of God, and the terribleness of His march towards them and seizing on them, as it is here highly set forth, this works an awful fear in the hearts of His own children. They cannot see their Father angry but it makes them quake, though it be not against them, but on their behalf. And this were our right temper, when we see or hear of the hand of God against wicked men, who run their own courses against all warning; —not to entertain these things with carnal rejoicings and lightness of mind, or with boasting insults; to applaud indeed the righteousness of God, and to give Him His glory, but withal, to fear before Him, though they were strangers and no way a part of ourselves, and to have a humble sense of the Lord's dealing in it; (so, Psal. lii. 6.) and to learn to reverence God; *in all our ways to acknowledge Him;* to be sure to take Him along with us, and to undertake nothing without Him.

And this fear of judgments falling upon others, is the way not to feel them on ourselves. When God sees that the sound of the rod on others' backs will humble a soul or a people, He will spare the stroke of it. They who have most of this holy fear of God's anger, fall least under the dint of it. *Blessed is he that feareth always; but he that hardens his heart, shall fall into mischief.* Prov. xxviii. 14. He that fears it not, shall fall into it; he that fears and trembles at it, shall escape. So the Prophet here trusts for himself: ver. 16: *I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble*, and upon this confidence, he rises to this high resolution, *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.*

The words, to make no other division of them, are a conjuncture of a *sad supposition*, and a *cheerful position*, or *purpose*.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom.] This is a thing that may come, and, possibly, which the Prophet did foresee would come, amongst other judgments; and it is of all other outward scourges the

sorest, most smarting, and most sweeping; cuts off most people, and can least be suffered and shifted. It lieth amongst the rest in the store-house of Divine judgments. He who furnished the earth, and gave being by the word of His mouth to all these things, hath still the sole, absolute power of them: they obey His word of command, and, rightly looked upon, in our use of them, and the sweetness we find in them, lead us to Him as the spring of being and goodness. He is invisible in His nature; in His works, most visible and legible. Not only the spacious heavens and the glorious lights in them, but the meanest things on earth, every plant and flower in their being and growing yea, every pile of grass, declare God to us.

And it is a supernatural light in natural things to see and taste Him in them. It is more pleasant than their natural relish; it is the chief inner sweetness, the kernel and marrow of all; and they that take not the pains, and have not the skill to draw it forth, lose the far better half of their enjoyments, even of the things of this earth. To think, how wise He is who devised such a frame, how powerful He who made all these things, how rich He must be who still continues to furnish the earth with these varieties of provisions, how sweet must He be, whence all these things draw their sweetness! But, alas! we are brutish, and in our use of these things, we differ little or nothing from the beast. We are called to a higher life, but we live it not. *Man is in honour, but he understands it not; he is as the beast that perishes.* Psal. xlix. 20.

Now, because we acknowledge God so little in the use of these things, therefore He is put to it (so to speak) to teach us our lesson in the want and deprivement of them, which our dulness is more sensible of. We know things a great deal better by wanting them, than by having them, and take more notice of that Hand which hath power of them, when He withdraws, than when He bestows them.

Besides all other provocations, and particular abuses of these things by intemperance and luxury, were it no more than the very neglecting of God in His goodness, this calls for a famine, to diet us into wiser thoughts, and to remind us of our own and all other creatures' dependence on that God whom we so forget, as to serve our idols and lusts upon His bounty. This was the case of Judah and Israel. See Hos. ii. 8—13. But when more sparingly fed, and better taught, *in the wilderness*, those mercies were restored again, and then, all acknowledged the dowry of that blessed marriage with Himself, which is so far beyond all account. Ver. 14—16.

How wretched ingratitude is it, not to regard and love Him in the use of all His mercies! But it is horrid stupidity, not to consider and seek to Him in their withdrawment, or in the threatening of it. Few have a right sense of His hand in any thing. They grumble and cry out, but not to Him. As in the case of oppression, it is said, Job xxxv. 9, 10, *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry; they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty, but none sayeth, Where is God my maker?*—so, of this very judgment of famine, the Prophet speaks, Hos. vii. 14: *And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds: they assembled themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.*

They did not humbly and repentingly seek to God by prayer, but a natural brutish sense of their wants pressed out complaints; they howled as a hungry dog would do for bread. This is all the most do, in years of dearth, or harvests threatening it. No beast in the mountain or wilderness is so untamed as the heart of man, which, when catched in God's judgments, lies and cries as a wild bull in a net. It is true, they are somewhat nearer sober thoughts in distress; and their grief though merely natural, yet is nearer spiritual grief, than their mirth and laughter; but it must have a touch of that Spirit above, to make it spiritual, to make it change to gold, to turn it to godly sorrow. No scourge carries a power of changing the heart with it; that is a superadded work. Many people, and particular persons, have been beat as in a mortar with variety of afflictions, one coming thick upon another, and yet, are never the wiser, and yet, *have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*

Therefore, if you be afflicted, join prayer with your correction, and beg by it, that God would join His Spirit with it. Seek this in earnest, else you shall be not a whit the better, but shall still endure the smart, and not reap the fruit thereof. Yea, I believe, some are the worse, even by falsely imagining they are better, partly presuming it must be so, and partly, may be, feeling some present motions and meltings in the time of afflictions, which evanish and presently cool when they are off the fire. Ay, but these two together make a happy man; *Blessed is he whom thou correctest, and teachest out of thy law.* Psal. xciv. 12.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom.] This sometimes does, and at any time may, befal a land; but, however, it is very useful to put such cases. It is true there is great odds betwixt real and imagined distresses; yet, certainly, the frequent viewing of its picture, though it is only in the imagination, hath so much likeness as somewhat abates the strangeness and frightfulness of its true visage when it comes.

There is a foolish pre-apprehension of possible evils, which, whether they come or not, does no good, but makes evils to come perplexingly beforehand, and antedates their misery, and adds the pain of many others that will never come. These are the fumes of a dark, distempered humour, vain fears, which vex and trouble some minds at present, and do not waste any thing of any grief to come after. But calmly and composedly to sit down and consider evil days coming, any kind of trials that probably, yea, or possibly, may arrive, so as to be ready to entertain them without astonishment: this is a wise and useful exercise of the mind, and takes off much of the weight of such things, breaks them in falling on us, that they come not so sad down, when they light first upon the apprehension. Thus, it is true, nothing comes unawares to a wise man. He hath supposed all, or as bad as any thing that can come, hath acquainted his mind with the horridest shapes, and therefore, when such things appear, will not so readily start at them.

This I would advise to be done, not only in things we can more easily suffer, but in those we think would prove hardest and most indigestible, to inure thy heart to them; not to be like some, who are

so tender-fancied, that they dare not so much as think of some things, the death of a dear friend, or husband, or wife, or child. That is oftener to be viewed, rather than any other event. Bring thy mind to it, as a starting-horse to that whereat it does most startle—What if I should be bereft of such a person, such a thing? This would make it much more tolerable when thou art put to it. What if the place where I live, were visited with all at once in some degree, pestilence, and sword, and famine? How should I look on them? Could my mind keep its own place and standing, fixed on God in such a case? What if I were turned out of my good furniture and warm house, and stripped not only of accessory, but necessary things; (as here he supposes not only the failing of delicacies, the fig-trees, wine, and olives, but of common necessary food, the fields not yielding meat, and the flocks cut off:) thy little ones crying for bread, and thou hast none for them? You little know what the tenderest and delicatest among you may be put to. These times have given many real instances, within these kingdoms, of strange changes in the condition of all ranks of persons. Or think, if thou abhorrest that, What if I were smitten with blotches or loathsome sores on my flesh, or if, by any accident, I should lose an arm, or an eye, or both eyes? What if extreme poverty, and sickness, and forsaking of friends, come all at once? Could I welcome these, and make up all in God,—find riches, and friends, and fulness in Him? Most men, if they would speak truly to such cases, must declare them insufferable:—I were undone if such a thing befel me, or such a comfort were taken from me. Most would cry out, as Micah did, Judg. xviii. 24, *Ye have taken away my gods;* for so are these things our hearts cleave to and principally delight in. He that worships mammon, his purse is the sensiblest piece of him: he is broke, if fire, or ravage of war, throw him out of his nest, and empty it. He that makes his *belly his god*, (such they are the Apostle speaks of, Phil. iii. 19.) how could he endure this case the Prophet puts here, the failing of vines, of flocks and herds?

It were good to add to the supposition of want, somewhat of the reality of it; sometimes to abridge thyself of things thou desirest and lovest, to inure thy appetite to a refusal of what it calls for; to practise somewhat of poverty, to learn to need few things.

It is strange, men should be so foolish as to tie themselves to these things, which have neither satisfying content in them, nor certain abode. And *why shouldst thou set thine eyes on things which are not*, says Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 5,—a *nonens*, a fancy? How soon may you be parted! He who is the true God, God alone, how soon can He pull the false gods from you, or you from them!—as in that word, Job xxvii. 8: *What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?* Like that case in the parable, Luke xii. 19: *Soul, take thine ease.* A strange inference from full barns! That were sufficient provision for a horse, a fit happiness for it; but for a soul, though it were to stay, how gross and base a portion! But it cannot stay neither: *This night thy soul shall be required of thee.*

The only firm position is this of the Prophet, *Yet will I rejoice in the Lord.* And such times indeed are fit to give proof of this, to tell thee

whether it be so indeed, where thy heart is built. While thy honour, and wealth, and friends are about thee, it is hard to know whether these props bear thee up, or another, an Invisible supporter; but when these are plucked away, and thou art destitute round about, then it will appear if thy strength be in God, if these other things were but flourishes about thee, and thou laidst no weight on them at all. He that leans on these, must fall when these fall, and his *hope is cut off*, and his *trust as a spider's web*. *He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand.* Job viii. 14, 15. They that clasp their hearts about their houses or estates, within a while they are either sadly pulled asunder, or swept away together.

But, Oh! the blessed, the high condition of a soul set on God, untied, independent from all things beside Him, its whole dependence and rest placed on Him alone, sitting loose to all the world, and so not stirred with alterations! Yea, amid the turnings upside-down of human things, if the frame of the heaven and earth were falling to pieces*, the heart founded on Him who made it, abides unmoved; *the everlasting arms are under* it, and bear it up.

Do ye believe, my brethren, that there is such a thing, that it is no fancy? Yea, all is but fancy beside it. Do you believe this? Why, then, is one day after another put off, and this not attained, nor the soul so much as entered or engaged to a serious endeavour after it, looking on all things else, compared to this noble design, as vanity? How often and how easily are their joys damped, who rejoice in other things, and their hopes broken! What they expected most, soon proves a lie, as the word spoken of the *olive*, here signifies; as if the *labour* of it should *lie* (*spem mentita seges*),—a fair vintage or harvest promised, and either withered with drought, or drowned with rain: indeed, it lies at the best! But the soul that places its joy on God, is still fresh and green when all are withered about it. Jer. xvii. 8: *Acquaint thyself with Him* betimes in ease. It is a sad case, to be making acquaintance with Him, when thou shouldest most make use of His friendship, and find comfort in His love.

Now, this joy in God cannot remain in an impure, unholy soul, no more than Heaven and Hell can mix together. An impure, unholy soul, I call not that which is stained with sin, for no other are under the sun; all must then quit all pretensions to that estate; but such a one as willingly entertains any sinful lust or way of wickedness. That delight and this are directly opposite. And certainly, the more the soul is refined from all delights of sin, yea, even from sinless delights of sense and of this present world, it hath the more capacity, the fitter and the larger room, for this pure, heavenly delight.

No language can make a natural man understand what this thing is, *to rejoice in God*. Oh! it is a mystery. Most men mind poor childish things, laughing and crying in a breath, at trifles; easily puffed up, and as easily cast down. But even the children of God are too little acquainted with this their portion. Which of you find this power in the remembrance of God, that it doth overflow and drown all other things, both your worldly joys and worldly sorrows, that you

* Si fractus illabatur orbis.

find them not? And thus it would be, if we knew Him. Is He, then, our Father, and yet we know Him not?

Although all should fail, yet, rejoice in Him who fails not, who alters not. He is still the same in Himself, and to the sense of the soul that is knit to Him, is then sweetest when the world is bitterest. When other comforts are withdrawn, the loss of them brings this great gain, so much the more of God and His love imparted, to make all up. They that ever found this, could almost wish for things that others are afraid of. If we knew how to improve them, His sharpest visits would be His sweetest: thou wouldest be glad to catch a kiss of His hand while He is beating thee, or pulling away something from thee that thou lovest, and bless Him while He is doing so.

Rejoice in God, although the fig-tree blossom not, &c. Yea, rejoice in these hardest things, as His doing. A heart rejoicing in him, delights in all His will, and is surely provided for the most firm joy in all estates; for if nothing can come to pass beside, or against, His will, then cannot that soul be vexed with delights in Him, and hath no will but His, but follows Him in all times, in all estates, not only when He shines bright on them, but when they are clouded. That flower which follows the sun, doth so even in cloudy days: when it doth not shine forth, yet it follows the hidden course and motion of it. So, the soul that moves after God, keeps that course when He hides His face; is content, yea, is glad at His will in all estates, or conditions, or events. And though not only all be withered and blasted without, but the face of the soul little better within to sense, no flourishing of graces for the present, yet, it rejoices in Him, and in that everlasting covenant that still holds, *ordered in all things and sure,* as the sweet singer of Israel sweetly expresses it, 2 Sam. xxv. 5: *For this,* says he, *is all my salvation, and all my desire,* ALTHOUGH *He make it not to grow.* That is a strange *although,* and yet is he satisfied even in that.

This joy in God, as *my God, the God of my salvation,* ought to exercise the soul in the darkest and worst times; and it ought to stick to it, not to let go this confidence, still expecting salvation from Him, and resting on Him for it, though not having those senses and assurances that thou desirest. This, weak believers are easily beaten from, by temptation. But we are to stand to our right in Him, even when we see it not. And when it is said to thee, as in Psalm iii., that *there is no help for thee in God,* tell all that say so, they lie: *He is my God, my glory, and the lifter up of my head;* as there he speaks.

Rejoice in Him still as *thy* God; and, however, rejoice in him as GOD. *I will rejoice in Jehovah,* glad that He is God, that His enemies cannot unsettle nor reach His throne, that He rules, and is glorious in all things, that He is self-blessed, and needs nothing. This is the purest and highest kind of rejoicing in Him, and is certainly most distant and most free from alteration, and hath, indeed, most of Heaven in it.

SERMON XXIII.

1 Cor. i. 30.

But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

The great design of the Gospel, is, to bring men to Jesus Christ; and, next to that, to instruct those who are brought to him, in the clearest knowledge, and to keep them in the fresh remembrance of the privileges and happiness they have in him. This the Apostles, writing to new converts, much insist upon, and Paul most abundantly; but no where more excellently and fully than in these words.

As that is a great and much commended oracle, *γνώθι σεαυτον Know thyself*, so, also, there can be nothing more comfortable and profitable for a Christian than this point, to understand his new being, to know himself as out of himself in Christ, to study what he is there. Oh! what joy, what humility, what holiness would it work, were we well seen and much conversant in this subject, viewing ourselves in this light, as here the Apostle represents a believer to himself, *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, &c.

If we look back a little, we see his aim is, to vindicate the doctrine of Christ from contempt in that chief point which is the believer's greatest comfort and glory, yet, lies openest to the world's misprision, the doctrine of the cross, *Christ crucified*. Him we preach, says he, let men take it as they please: be he a *stumbling-block to the Jews*, and *foolishness to the Gentiles*, yet, *to them that believe* among both, he is *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*.

As, in the person of Christ, glory was wrapped up in meanness, so it was in his sufferings and death. And in the doctrine of it, and in the way of preaching of it, they are not dressed with *human wisdom*, or *excellency of speech*: this would be as incongruous as that rich, gaudy attire they cover the image of the Virgin with, and her Child lying in a stable. And that all might be suitable, so is it in the persons of those that believe on him. *Brethren, you see your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.* And God's purpose in this, is, *that no flesh should glory before Him.*

This is the grand disease of flesh, to swell in conceit of any little advantages, real or imagined, forgetting itself and Him from whom it receives all, receives its very self, the being it hath, and all superadded good. Now, God is pleased, in justice on some, and in great mercy to others, so to order most things in the world, as to allay this tumour; often bringing down high things, and raising the low, and so attempering and levelling disparities as to take men off from self-glorying. Proud undertakings, we see, are commonly most disgracefully broken. Nor is there any surer presage of the speedy ruin of any affairs or persons, than presumptuous boasting. This is God's work amongst men, as even natural men have observed, to abase high things, to exalt low things. He goes from one thing to another, pulling down the crest and blasting the glory of all human excellency, breaking the likeliest

projects, and effecting what is least to be expected, *withdrawing man from his purpose, to hide pride from his eyes*, as Elihu speaks, Job xxxiii. 17. To this purpose, see Job x. 11, 12; 1 Sam. ii. 4, 5; and the Virgin in her song, Luke i. 51. Whatsoever men bear themselves big upon, and begin to glory in, they call the hand of God to crush it, raising an idol of jealousy in his sight. All high things have their day: *the day of the Lord shall be on all the cedars of Lebanon, and He alone exalted.* Isa. ii. 13, 17. If ever this was the case in any time, we may see it is legible in ours, in great letters. This is the very result of His ways, staining the pride of all glory, defeating witty counsels, making counsellors mad, throwing down all plumes and trampling them in the mire, that no party or persons in the kingdom can set out for any triumph of courage, or wit, or any other excellency, but somewhat shall be clearly seen to meet and dash it in pieces, *that no flesh may glory before Him.* And this, to souls that love God, is the main happiness of the times, and that wherein they will chiefly rejoice.

The particular here spoken of, is eminently suited to this end, the choice and calling of persons to the dignity of Christians: *Not many wise, not many mighty, or noble*, but *the mean things, the foolish things*, and the most insignificant, *things that are not, non-entia*, very nothings, to annul things that seem most to be something. Thus it was in the first times; and though afterwards, by means of these meaner persons, greater were caught and drawn into Christ, philosophers and kings, yet still it remains true in all times, that predominantly the choice is of the meaner sort; God testifying how little He esteems those things which men account great. Those endowments of wit and eloquence which men admire in some, alas! how poor are they to Him! He respecteth not any who are wise in heart: they are nothing, and less than nothing in His eyes. He is the author of all these. *Will He esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.* Job xxxvi. 19. Even wise men admire how little it is that men know, how small a matter lies under the sound of those popular wonders, a learned man, a great scholar, a great statesman: how much more doth the all-wise God meanly account of these! He often discovers, even to the world, their meanness; He befools them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatness, these He gives, and gives as things He makes no great reckoning of, to such as shall never see His face; and calls to the inheritance of glory poor despised creatures, who are looked on as the offscourings and refuse of the world: these are *raised from the dunghill* and *set with princes*, made *the sons and daughters of God*, entitled each of them to *a crown that fades not.* Oh the wonder!

Now, they are not puffed up with this, but the more assurance they have, and the clearer their view is of the state they are called to, the more humble they are; still laying these together, What was I in myself? and, What am I in Christ? And, in comparing these, they are swallowed up with amazement at that love which made this change; and for this very end doth the Apostle express thus their estate, *Ye are of Him in Christ Jesus.*

This is a new being, a creation; for, in relation to this being, we are nothing in our state of nature; and then, considering that in rela-

tion to others, the meanest are often chosen and made partakers of this being, such as have nothing naturally great of nobility, or morality, or high intellectuals; the most nothings are often chosen and made partakers of this being, to illustrate the power of Him who makes them exist. In kings somewhat may be observed of this in their choice of favourites, and raising men who are not of highest deserving, as affecting to shew their freedom in choice, and their power in making out of nothing, and so they love to have them called their creatures. But these are but shadows: both are poor creatures, both are easily thrown down. But God doth indeed shew, in His choice, His freedom and power in His new creature: He draws them out of the lowest bottom of nothing, and raises them to the most excellent kind of being that creatures are capable of, to be *the sons of God, and so heirs, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus.* Rom. viii. 17.

Ye are of Him in Christ Jesus.] This must be taken in an eminent sense. All the creatures are *of God;* but man, even in his first creation, for the dignity of his being, and the slow way of forming him, was accounted to be *of God*, in a peculiar manner; formed to His own likeness, and therefore called *the Son of God*, called *His offspring.* Acts xvii. 28. But in this new being, much more are we so: we are *of Him* as His children, partakers of the Divine nature, and that so fastened, that it abideth. And the medium of this excellent and permanent being is primarily to be considered; for in him it becomes so. It is both high and firm, being in the essential Son, as the foundation of it; therefore here expressed, as bearing the whole weight of this happy fabric.

Of Him ye are in Christ Jesus. The life which believers derive from God is through *Him.* He is that eternal Word, by which all things were made in their first creation, and do still subsist. Heb. i.; John i. And he is made the basis of the second creation, in a wonderful way, becoming himself a creature; and so, the root of the new progeny is from Heaven, *the sons of God:* so it follows in both these cited scriptures. John i. 12—14. *The Word was made flesh*, and so, they that *receive Him* are made *the Sons of God.* And so, Heb. ii. 10, 11, amply and excellently is that mystery unfolded. The first frame of man, at least the excellency and beauty of it, was broken by his fall; therefore a new model is framed of a selected number, to be a new world, more firm than the former, united unto God so close, as never to be severed again. Man, though he was made holy and God-like, continued not in that honour. Now, God himself becomes a man, to make all sure: that is the foundation of an indissoluble union. Man is knit to God in the person of Christ so close, that there is no possibility of dividing them any more; and this union of our nature in his person is made the ground of the union of our persons with God. We find our own flesh catch hold in Christ of a man, and in that man may find God, and are made one with Him by faith in Christ. And this all the powers of hell cannot dissolve. Our life none can cut off from His, more than a man can cut a beam from off the sun. We are and subsist of God in Christ. This is an unknown mystery, but, were it known, it would prove a depth of rich, inexhaustible consolation. The world doth not know what Christians are. This is no wonder;

for truly they know not themselves, or but very little. How would it elevate their spirits, but not in pride! Oh! nothing is more humbling than this, as the Apostle here implies. But it would raise them above the world, and suit their desires and their actions to their condition, having all under foot that the world accounts great, walking as heirs of Heaven, led and moved by the Spirit of Christ in them; thinking, when solicited to any base way, How doth this become the sons of God? Shall one who lives in Christ, degrade Him so much, as to borrow comfort or pleasure from any sin, for the killing and destruction whereof He laid down His precious life?

Oh, my brethren, that this Divine ambition were kindled in your breasts, to partake of this high and happy being, and leave all your pursuits to follow this, restless till you be in Christ! For solid, abiding rest, sure I am, out of him there is none. And then, being in him, remember where you are, and what you are. *Walk in Christ*, and live like him, as one with him indeed: let his thoughts and desires be yours. What was his work, yea, what his refreshment, his meat and drink? To do his Father's will. Oh! when shall we find ourselves so minded, as the Apostle's word is, *the same mind in us that was in Christ?*

Who of God is made unto us wisdom.] *Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.* It was not an accidental after-device in God, (for in Him there can be no such thing,) but was his great forethought project, out of the ruins of man's first estate, to raise a fairer and firmer fabric, new from the very foundation. And in the new foundation lies the model, and excellency, and stability of the whole structure. This is the choicest of all His works, wherein He chiefly glories; His master-piece, which great angels admire; and this is it, *Who of God is made unto us, wisdom.* And this is one letter of His name. He is called *Wonderful*, who is here spoken of; so all is wonderful in this work: *wonderful*, first, that He should be *made* any thing, the Maker of all things Himself made something which before He was not; then *made to us*—that He should be made any thing to *our* interest and advantage, who are a company of traitors; and *made unto us of God*, the God against whom we rebelled and continued naturally enemies! The purpose was bred in the Father's own breast, to give out His Son, from thence to recover us and bring us back. Oh, astonishing depth of love! Then, *made unto us* what? Rather, what not? We are made up in Him for ever rich and happy; He being made all unto us, all we need, or can desire, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* Without Him, we are undone, forlorn caitiffs, masses of misery, as you say, having nothing either *in us or on us*, nothing but poverty and wretchedness, blindness and nakedness, altogether ignorant of the way to happiness, yea, ignorant of our very misery, a nest of fools, natural fools, children of folly, (as they who are renewed by, and provided with, this wisdom, are called *children of wisdom*,) guilty, filthy, condemned slaves.

This is the goodly posture we are in, out of Christ; yet, who is sensible of it? How few can be brought to serious thoughts about it! Nay, are not the most in the midst of this misery, yet full of high conceits of their worth, wit, freedom, &c.? As frantic bedlamites,

lying naked and filthy in their chains, yet dream they are great and wise persons, commanding and ordering all about them; fancying, possibly, that they are kings, a stick in their hands a sceptre, and their iron chains of gold. This is a pleasing madness for the time; yet, who does not pity it that looks on?

Methinks I see one of this sort, when I see one evidently destitute of Christ, bearing himself big upon the fancy of his parts, and birth, and riches, or stoutness; see such, upon any cross word, swelling against others, threatening high, and protesting they will be slaves to none; not knowing that, even while they speak thus, they are wretched caitiffs, under the hardest and basest kind of slavery. Inquire, my brethren, if ever you had a right and clear view of your natural misery; otherwise you are, it is likely, still in it, and though you profess to believe in Christ, are not yet gone out of yourselves to him, and not knowing your great need of him, do certainly make little esteem and little use of him. *You are full, and reign without him;* all is well and in quiet; but it is owing to the *strong man's* yet possessing the house, and keeping you captives as quiet as he can, that you look not out, or cry for a deliverer. He is afraid of Him, to be dispossessed and turned out by Him who is stronger, the mighty Redeemer that came out of Zion. Oh, that many amongst you were crying to Him, and waiting for Him, to come unto you for your rescue!

Made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.] To supply and help all, He is our magazine whither to have recourse to: for this end, He is replenished with *all the fulness of God*, the very *fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, the Spirit being not given to Him by measure.* He is fit to be *made our wisdom*, who is *the wisdom of the Father;* as here in this place, the Apostle lately called him, *the wisdom of God. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. They that find him, and come unto him, find it so; but the most look but on the surface; they hear his name, and know not what is under it.

Made unto us righteousness. By fulfilling the whole law, and *all righteousness*, Matt. iii. 15, and yet, suffering the rigour of it, as if he had transgressed it. No guile, no spot was found on him: he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, and yet, the greatest sinner by imputation: *The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. And so, Psalm xl. 12, which is prophesied of him: *Mine iniquities have taken hold of me.* He owns them as *his*, though not his. He endured all that justice could require, entered and paid the debt, and is acquitted and set free again, and *exalted at the right hand of God.* So it is evident that he is *righteous*, even in that representative and sponsional person he put on.

Sanctification. Christ is a living spring of that; *anointed above his fellows.* In him is no mixture of any iniquity. The Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles in the shape of fire; there was somewhat to be purged in them; they were to be quickened and enabled by it for their calling. But on him, it descended *as a dove:* there was no need of cleansing or purging out any thing. That was a symbol of the spotless purity of his nature, and of the fulness of the Spirit dwelling in him.

And redemption. Christ is mighty to save, and having a right to save; a *kinsman*, a *brother*. And as he hath bought freedom for sinners, so, he will put them in possession of it, will effect and complete it. All that are in him, are really delivered from the power of sin and death, and shall, ere long, be perfectly and fully so: they shall be lifted up above them, no longer to be molested with any remainders of either, or with the fear of them, or so much as any grief for them. And that day is called *the day of redemption*, to which we are beforehand made sure and *sealed by the Spirit*. Ephes. iv. 30.

We cannot then doubt of his fitness and fulness to be these, and these *for us*; but withal, we must know that he is designed so to be *made unto us*, and that he came, and did, and suffered all for this purpose, and having done, returned, and now lives, to be these to us. It is his place and office, and so, his delight; he loves to be put upon the performance of this, to be their *wisdom and righteousness*. *Made of God to us.* It is agreed betwixt the Father and him, that he should be so. He is *the wisdom of God*, and *made of God our wisdom*. Wonderful! that the same which is *His own wisdom*, and no less, He would *make ours*. And now, under a sense of all our ignorances and follies, it becomes us to go to him, to apply ourselves to him, and apply him to us. He is called our *Head*, and called so most fitly, for it is the place of all our wisdom; that lies in our head. And so, as to all the rest, *righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. If he be *righteousness* in himself, and holy, and victor over his enemies, and set free from wrath and death, then are *we* so too, in him; for he is *ours*, and so *ours*, that we become what he is, are inrighted to all he hath, and endowed with all his goods; though poor and base in ourselves, yet married to him: that is the title. We are made rich, and noble, and free, we are righteous and holy, because *he* is. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti. The wife shines with the rays of her husband.* All debts and pleas are taken off, he stands betwixt us and all hazard, and in him we stand acquitted and justified before God.

That which makes up the match, and ties the knot of this union, is *faith*. *He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness*, &c. He is tendered and held out as all these, in the promise of the Gospel; not only declared to be really furnished and fit so to be, but offered to be so, and we warranted, yea, invited and entreated, to receive him as such. But he is effectually *made* to be this *to us, to me*, by believing, the promise being brought home and applied of God, and faith wrought in the heart to entertain and unite to him. Ἡ πίστις ἰσοποιεῖ: Faith closes the bargain, and makes him *ours*. Now, in that, he is *made unto us*, not *of ourselves*, but *God*, for that is His gift and work: we cannot believe, any more than we can fulfil the whole law. And though men think it a common and easy thing, to accept of so sweet an offer at so cheap a rate, nothing being required but to receive him, yet, this is a thing that naturally all refuse. *No man cometh*, says he, *except the Father draw him.* John vi. 44. Though men be beseeched to come, yet, the most *will not come unto* him, *that they may have life. To as many as received him, he gave the privilege to become the sons of God*, John i. 12; and yet, for all that, many did not receive him; yea, as there it is expressed, *He came to his own, but his own*

received him not. They who were nearest to him in natural relation and interest, yet refused him, for the most part, and attained not this blessed spiritual interest in him unto life.

It should be considered, my brethren, Christ is daily held out, and none are excluded or excepted, all are invited, be they what they will, who have need of him and use for him; and yet, who is persuaded? Oh, *who hath believed our report?* One hath his *farm*, another his *oxen*, each some engagement or another. Men are not at leisure for Christ. Why? You think, may be, you have received him. If it be so, you are happy. Be not deluded. Have you received him? Do you find him then living and ruling within you? Are your eyes upon him? Do you wait on him, early and late, to see what his will is? Is your soul glad in him? Can you, in distress, sickness, or poverty, clasp to him, and find him sweet, and allay all with this thought, However things go with me, yet, Christ is in me? Doth your heart cleave to him? Certainly, if he be in you, it will be thus; or, at least, your most earnest desire will be, that it may be thus.

Men will not believe how hard a matter it is, to believe the fulness and sufficiency of Jesus Christ, till they be put to it in earnest to make use of him, and then they find it: when sin and death are set before their view, and discovered in their native colours unto the soul, when a man is driven to that, *What shall I do to be saved?* then, then is the time to know what notion he hath of Christ. And as the difficulty lies in this, in the first awakening of the conscience from sin, so, in after-times of temptation and apprehension of wrath, when, upon some new-added guiltiness, or a new sight of the old, in a frightful manner, *sin revives and the soul dies*, it is struck dead with the terrors of the law,—then to keep thy hold, and find another life in Christ, the law and justice satisfied, and so the conscience quieted in him; this is indeed to believe.

It is a thing of huge difficulty, to bring men to a sense of their natural misery, to see that they have need of a saviour, and to look out for one: but then, being brought to that, it is no less, if not more difficult, to persuade them that Christ is he; that, as they have need of him, so they need no more, he being able and sufficient for them. All the waverings and fears of misbelieving minds, do spring from dark and narrow apprehensions of Jesus Christ. All the doubt is, not of their interest, as they imagine: they who say so, and think it so, do not perceive the bottom and root of their own malady. They say, they do no whit doubt but that he is able enough, and his righteousness large enough, but that all the doubt is, *if he belong to me.* Now, I say, this doubt arises from a defect and doubt of the former, wherein you suspect it not. Why doubtest thou that he belongs to thee? Dost thou flee to him, as lost and undone in thyself? Dost thou renounce all that can be called thine, and seek thy life in him? Then he is thine. *He came to seek and to save that which was lost.* Oh, but I find so much, not only former, but still daily renewed and increasing guiltiness. Why, is he a sufficient Saviour, or is he not? If thou dost say, he is not, then it is manifest that here lies the defect and mistake. If thou sayest, he is, then hast thou answered all thy objections of that kind: much guiltiness, much or little, old or new, neither helps nor

hinders, as to thy interest in him and salvation by him. And for dispelling of these mists, nothing can be more effectual than the letting in of those Gospel beams, the clear expressions of his riches and fulness in the Scriptures, and eminently this, *Made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

Wisdom. Both *objectively* and *effectively*. *Objectively*, I mean, our wisdom, as all our wisdom lies in the right knowledge and apprehension of him. And this suits to the Apostle's present discourse. The *Jews* would have *a sign*, and the *Gentiles, wisdom;* but *We*, says he, *preach Christ.* So, ch. ii., ver. 2: *I determined to know nothing, save Christ crucified.* He was learnedly bred, and knew many things beside, much of nature, and much of the law; but all this was, to him, obsolete, useless stuff: it was as if he never had heard of or known any thing else but Jesus Christ. We may know other things, but this, and this alone, is our wisdom, *to know him, and him crucified.* Particularly, we may have knowledge of the law, and by it the knowledge of sin; but in relation to our standing before God, and so, our happiness, which is the greatest point of wisdom, Jesus Christ is alone, and is all. And the more firmly a soul eyes Christ, and loses all other knowledge and itself in contemplating him, the more truly wise and heavenly it is.

And *effectively* he is our wisdom. All our right knowledge of him and belief in him, flow from himself, are derived from him, and sent into our souls. His Spirit is conveyed into ours; a beam of himself, as of the sun. This Sun of righteousness is not seen but by his own light; so that every soul that is made wise unto salvation, that is brought to apprehend Christ, to cleave to him, and repose on him, it is by an emission of Divine light from himself, that shows him, and leads unto him. And so we know God in him. There is no right knowledge of the Father but in the Son. God dwelling in the *man, Christ*, will be found or known no where else; and they that consider and worship God out of Christ, do not know or worship the true God, but a false notion and fancy of their own.

The *Shechinah*, the *habitation of the Majesty*, is Jesus Christ: there He dwells as between the cherubims over the mercy-seat. To apprehend God so as to love Him and trust in Him all our life, to hope to find favour and bliss with Him, this is the only wise knowledge of Him. Now, this alone is in Christ, and from him. He contains this representation of God, and gives his own light to see it. So that a Christian's desire should be, in relation to Jesus Christ, that of David in reference to the Temple, as a figure of him, *One thing have I desired of Him, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord;* that I may get in to Christ, to know God there, *to behold the beauty of the Lord.* There we see beauty indeed, the Father's glory, and so, as *our Father* reconciled to us, we see Him *merciful and gracious.* And as we should desire *to behold*, so, still, *to inquire in His Temple*, to advance in the knowledge of God, studying Him in Christ: we are to admire what we see, and to seek still to see more. And know, that this knowledge of God, as we have it *in Christ*, so it is *from him.* He reveals the Father: he came from His bosom for that purpose. We cannot believe on him, cannot come near God through him, but as he lets forth of his light, to conduct and lead us

in, yea, powerfully to draw in, for his light does so. Now, knowing and apprehending him by his own light, his Spirit, the Apostle clears it, that this is our *wisdom*, by those rich titles added, according to which we find him to us, when we receive from him that wisdom by which we apprehend him aright and lay hold on him, then *made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

Righteousness. This doubtless is meant of the righteousness by which we are justified before God. And he is *made this to us:* applied by faith, *His* righteousness becomes *ours.* That exchange made, our sins are laid over upon him, and his obedience put upon us. This is the great glad tidings, that we are made righteous by Christ. It is not a righteousness wrought by us, but given to us, and put upon us. This carnal reason cannot comprehend, and being proud, therefore rejects and argues against it; says, *How can this thing be?* But faith closes with it, and rejoices in it. Without either doing or suffering, the sinner is acquitted and justified, and stands as guiltless of breach, yea, as having fulfilled the whole law. And happy they who thus fasten upon this righteousness! They may lift up their faces with gladness and boldness before God; whereas the most industrious, self-saving justiciary, though in other men's eyes and his own, possibly, for the present, he makes a glittering show, yet, when he shall come to be examined of God, and tried according to the Law, he shall be covered with shame, and confounded in his folly and guiltiness. But faith triumphs over self-unworthiness, and sin, and death, and the Law, shrouding the soul under the mantle of Jesus Christ; and there it is safe. All accusations fall off, having no where to fasten, unless some blemish could be found in that righteousness in which faith hath wrapt itself. This is the very spring of solid peace, and fills the soul with peace and joy. But still men would have something within themselves to make out the matter, as if this robe needed any such piecing; and not finding what they desire, thence disquiet and unsettlement of mind arise.

True it is, that this faith purifies the heart, and works holiness, and all graces flow from it; but in this work of justifying the sinner, it is alone, and cannot admit of any mixture. As Luther's resemblance is, "Faith is as the bride with Christ in the bed-chamber alone; but when she cometh forth, hath the attendance and train of other graces with her." This well understood, the soul that believes on Jesus Christ, will not let go for all deficiency in itself; and yet, so resting on him, will not be slothful nor regardless of any duty of holiness. Yea, this is the way to abound in all the fruits of the Spirit, first to have that *wisdom* from him, rightly to apprehend and apply him as our *righteousness*, and then shall we find all furniture of grace in him; he will likewise be *sanctification.* Say not, Unless I find some measure of *sanctification*, what right have I to apply him as my *righteousness?* This inverts the order, and disappoints thee of both. Thou must first, without finding, yea, or seeking any thing in thyself but misery and guiltiness, lay hold on him as thy *righteousness;* or else thou shalt never find *sanctification* by any other endeavour or pursuit.

He it is that is *made sanctification to us*, and out of him we seek it in vain. Now, first he must be *thy righteousness*, before thou find him

thy sanctification. Simply, as a guilty sinner, thou must flee to him for shelter; and then, being come in, thou shalt be furnished out of his fulness, with *grace for grace.* As a poor man pursued by the justiciary, fleeing to a strong castle for safety, and being in it, finds it a rich palace, and all his wants supplied there.

This misunderstanding of that method, is the cause of that darkness and discomfort, and withal of that deadness and defect of graces, that many persons go drooping under, who will not take this way, the only straight and sure way of life and comfort. Now,

Sanctification he is to us, not only as a perfect pattern, but as a powerful principle. It is really the spirit of Christ in a believer, that crucifies the world, and purges out sin, and forms the soul to his likeness. It is impossible to be holy, not being in him; and being truly in him, it is as impossible not to be holy. Our pothering and turmoiling without him, makes us lose our labour; and in this point, indeed, *little wit makes much labour.*

Redemption. Sin is often prevailing even in believers, and therewithal discomforts and doubts arising, as it cannot otherwise choose. Oh, how do they groan and sigh as captives still to the law of sin and death? Well there is in our Lord Jesus help for that too. He is *redemption;* that is the complement and fulness of deliverance. The price he paid once for all: now he goes on to work that deliverance by conquest, which he bought by ransom. It is going on even when we feel it not, and within a little while, it shall be perfected, and we shall see all the host of our enemies who pursued us, as Israel saw the Egyptians, lie dead upon the shore. Courage! that day is coming.

And all this is, *That he that glories, may glory in the Lord.* Is it reasonable? No self-glorying: the more faith, the less will there be still of that. A believer is nothing in himself: all is Christ's, Christ is his all. That treasurer who, being called to an account, because that out of nothing he had enriched himself suddenly, many thought he would have been puzzled with it; but he, without being much moved, next morning came before the king in an old suit that he wore before he got that office, and said, "Sir, this suit on my back is mine, but all the rest is thine." So, our old suit is ours, all the rest Christ's, and he allows it well. And in the full and pure glory that ascends to God in this work, are we to rejoice more than in the work itself as our salvation. There is an humble kind of boasting that becomes a Christian. *My soul shall glory* (or *make her boast*) *in God,* says David *all the day long.* What was I before I met with Christ, thinks a believer, and now what am I? And, upon that thought, he wonders and loves. But most of the wonder is yet to come; for he conceives but little *what we shall be.*

SERMON XXIV.

Jeremiah x. 23, 24.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.

It cannot be expressed, what an advantage a heart acquainted with God hath, in all the revolutions and changes of the world, when it turns unto Him, and gives vent to its griefs and desires into His bosom, and so finds ease. This the Prophet does here: after the denouncing of a heavy judgment, he turns towards him from whom he brought that message, to entreat for them to whom he brought it. After a very sad close of his sermon, he adds this short but very sweet prayer; presents himself, and speaks in that style, as representing the whole people; *Correct me, O Lord:* he makes their calamity, as it were, all his own; bears their person, and presents his petition for them in his own name. The prophets, though they could not but applaud and approve the justice of God who sent them, in the harshest news they brought, yet, withal, could not be insensible to the miseries of His people; and so we find them mixing pathetical complaints and prayers for them, with the predictions of judgments against them.

Observe. And thus are all His faithful ministers affected towards His Church. The Lord himself is pleased to express a kind of regret, ometimes, in the punishing of them; as the tender-hearted father feels the lashes he lays on, though highly deserved by the stubbornness of His children. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I make thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* Hos. xi. 8. So it well becomes His servants to be thus affected when they deliver sad news to His people, to return praying for them; thus going as angels betwixt Heaven and Earth, beseeching the people to return unto God, and beseeching God to return to His people, and spare them.

The Prophet, in this prayer, first premises a *position* suiting his purpose, and then, upon that, presents his *supplication*. The *position* he lays, to make a double benefit of it in order to his *petition*. It is both a sure ground for himself to stand on, and a fit argument to move God by. Thus it is, and thus he intends and uses it, at once to support his own faith, and to work on the goodness of God by it. Besides the fitness of the truth itself for both these ends, we find some print of both in the very way of expressing it, *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself;* so expressing both his own persuasion of the truth of it, *I know*, and representing it to God as a fit truth to urge his suit by, *O Lord, I know.*

Observe. A great part of the strength and art of prayer, lies in this: first, to have the mind furnished with fit conceptions of God, and established in the firm persuasions of them; in that is much of the strength of prayer: then, fitly to call up and use these conceptions

and persuasions for our own supporting and prevailing with God; in that lies the art of it.

We possibly think that we do sufficiently believe both the goodness and power of God, especially His power, none suspecting himself of the least doubt of it; yet our perplexing doubts and fears, our feeble staggerings in faith and prayer, upon particular pressing difficulties, discover evidently a defect here, though still we will not own it. And alas! how little faculty have we in the most needful times, to rest on His strength, and to stir up ourselves to stir Him up by prayer, to do for us, holding firm to that great point of His absolute sovereignty and power over all things, and holding it up to Him, entreating Him by it to appear and work for us. Lord, it is in Thy hand; that I know, and that is enough to me: thy good-will I dare trust. (For there is implied a secret confidence of that.) This contents me, that Thou hast full power of the business. That is the thing which here the Prophet fixes on. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. q. d.* As there is in us no power to turn off the judgment determined, all our wit and strength can do nothing to that, so we are sure there is no power in our enemies to do any thing either beyond or beside Thy appointment, in the execution of it. And upon this, Lord, we come to supplicate Thee for mitigation. With men it often falls out, either in just punishments, or unjust oppressions, that the ministers and under-officers do exceed their commission, and overdo their business; yea, sometimes add little less of their own, than all that comes to which is appointed to them. But with Thee, O Lord, it is not so. As our enemies cannot stir of themselves without order from Thee, and as Thy commissions are always all just, so Thou seest to the performance, art present at it, which often men cannot be; and so nothing is, or can be, done beside Thy notice and allowance.

I. His position is this, *The way of man is not in himself*, and repeated more plainly, *It is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps;* thus, by a double negation, putting it altogether out of his power. And under this, the positive truth is couched, that *the absolute disposal of all the ways of men is wholly in the supreme hand of God;* according to that, Prov. xx. 24, *Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man, then, understand his own way?* He doth not certainly know any thing of his own doings. Even he who seems to know most, to advise and deliberate upon all he does, yet hath no power of his contrivements, knows not which way they will turn, till the event doth clear it, and even then, on looking back, is often amazed at the strange course of things, so far different from, and possibly contrary to all his witty projectings and models. He often does not attain *his own*, but he never fails to accomplish God's purpose even when his intentions are least from it, yea, when they are most against it. *Let us build a tower*, said they, *lest we be scattered abroad*, Gen. xi.; and that was the very thing which caused their scattering. Joseph was sold by his brethren, that they might not *bow before him*, as he had dreamed; and this brought it to pass. Pharaoh says, *Let us deal wisely;* and that way of oppressing them, lest they should go away, both stirred up God to deliver them, and disposed them to depart.

And not to multiply instances, generally in all the ways of men, they have their designs at most times eccentric to God's, but His design holds always, and theirs no further than they are His. Have we not ourselves seen instances of this?

Man consults and determines freely, yet even those inward actings of the mind and will, are ordered and framed by the hand of God; and it cannot otherwise be. It is a most vain fancy, to imagine that any thing in this is inconsistent with the natural liberty of the will, or that any such liberty can be in any creature, as consists not with His. But because, in these inward actings, man finds himself more at his choice, though all is secretly overruled, and in the event of things, God's sovereign disposal is more legible; therefore, these two are expressed with some kind of difference, Prov. xvi. 9: *A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his steps.* That is, when he hath devised, that does not carry it: he may devise and fancy things twenty ways, and think he is taking freely his own course, but he shall find in the issue Another Hand than his own. *It is not in man that walks,* as the word is here: *he walketh,* and yet the direction of his steps is in Another Hand. But in the devisings too, the Lord so acts upon man, that he is turned which way it pleaseth him. Even the heart, and that of the most uncontrolled, the most impetuous torrent, *the king's heart is in His hand, as the rivers of waters: He turneth it whithersoever He will,* Prov. xxi. 1. When men either determine themselves, or follow unallowed ways for determination (as those, Ezek. xxi. 21), yet are they ordered of God. This He does infallibly and uncontrollably, yet in such a way as there is nothing distorted or violented. *Fortiter et suaviter,*—all is so done. Things are in their own course, and men are in their voluntary choices; yet, all subserving the great Lord, and His ends, and His glory, who made them all for himself: as the lower orbs have each their motion, but are all wheeled about with the first. Men know not what He is doing by them, and what in the end He will do with them. With the *rod of Assyria* He scourges His children, and then throws the rod in the fire. Isa. x. 5, and 16. The horse-leech draws the blood to fill itself, but the physician intends the patient's health. Men are drawn on by temporal prosperings and successes to drive proudly and furiously, till they drive themselves over the edge of the precipice appointed for their ruin; and all His exalting them for a season, is, in the end, to exalt Himself in their greater and more remarkable destruction. *I will get Me a name upon Pharaoh, and all his host.* Men are busy, consulting or acting with or against one another, and He sits and laughs at their wisest plots: He alone is in all affairs, doing all His own will in Heaven and in earth.

Oh! the folly and blindness of men, who think to carry all to their minds, and walk as masters of their own designs, and never have any serious thought of Him in whose hands both they and all their business, and all the affairs of states and kingdoms of this world, are as a piece of wax, to frame them to what He pleases,—He who *destroys the counsels of the wise,* and *makes the diviners mad,* who *pours contempt upon princes, leads counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools;* He who hath set limits to all things, to the *raging of the sea,* making the

small sand give check to the great ocean: when it *brake out of the womb*, He had a cradle provided for it, and swaddling bands, Job xxxviii., and there, though it rolls to and fro, yet it cannot get out. Oh! it is ignorance of God makes men rush on, and not inquire whether He be with them or no. Moses was wise and stout, and leader of a numerous people, yet he would not stir on other terms: *If Thou go not with us, let us not go up hence.* Well, if men will on their peril, be it; let us reverence God. For even this is for Him, and He will gain His glory out of it. *The way of man is not in himself.* If we see their folly, let us learn to be wiser, to keep close to Him, and desire His gracious direction to our ways; for it is not in our hands, even when we intend best. And for public affairs, let us rest satisfied in His part. Amidst all disorders, He is ordering all wisely and justly, and to them who love Him, graciously; therefore we ought not to be dismayed. Let us calm our thoughts with this, remember who it is that rules all, and disposes of peace and war, and all affairs, and we cannot wish them in a better hand. I am persuaded, that in all the commotions of the world, when a believer thinks on this, it cannot but calm and compose his spirit exceedingly: *My Father rules all.* Let this so quiet our fears, as that withal it quicken our prayers, and stir us up to the work of this day,—repentant, humble seeking unto God; seeing all is in His hands, our peace, our liberties, and our enemies, that threaten to bereave us of both. Oh! that the effect of all our troubles and dangers were to drive us more to God, to make us throng more about the throne of grace, to draw forth our King for our help! Oh, our impenitence and unreformedness! That turns Him to be our enemy, and that only. Men are nothing. And now, in so great straits, yet, so little calling on Him! Oh, my brethren what are we doing? Oh! pray, pray. It is our God that commands all, and we may say it upon His own warrant, *it is prayer that commands Him.*

II. The petition: *Correct me,* &c. When the hand of God is stretched out against a people or a person, certainly there is no running from Him. The only wise and safe course is, to run unto him. This the Prophet does in behalf of his people, and by his example teaches them so to do. As the Prophet utters his own sense and desires in this prayer, so he sets it as a copy to the people of God in time of judgment to pray by; shews them the way, which is, not vainly to offer to flee from Him, or proudly to stand out against Him, to their undoing, but to humble themselves under His mighty hand, supplicating Him, yielding themselves, and begging quarter. *Correct me, O Lord, with judgment, not in anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.* That I should suffer for my rebellion, there is good reason; yet, Lord, do not utterly destroy me, which will be, if the weight of Thine anger fall upon me. And for that, though indeed we have deserved it, yet there is another vent for it, and, pardon us to say so, fitter matter for it: *Pour out Thy wrath upon the Heathen:* ver. 25: let it go out that way.—So we see the supplication hath these two particulars in it, an *aversion*, and a *diversion;* an *aversion* of the anger of God upon His own people under correction, and a *diversion* of it upon His and their enemies; Lord, turn from us, and pour it out there. The *aversion* is presented, qualified with a humble submission, declaring expressly

they decline not that correction of God, but only deprecate His consuming anger. *Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment*, that is, with measure; such as the discretion and love of a father resolves on towards his child, Thus much will I correct him for his good, and no further.

Not in Thine anger. God is pleased to express His displeasure against sin, by wrath and anger, even towards His own children. But the anger which here the Prophet entreats exception from, for the Church, is anger opposed to judgment, unbounded, destroying anger, that knows no limits nor stop, but the devouring of those against whom it is kindled. This is spoken in our language, but it is to be understood in a way suiting the purity of God. In Him truly is no passion at all, much less any that is not ordered by wisdom and judgment. He is not carried in heat beyond His purposed measure, but knows well how far He intends to go with any, and goes no farther. But as His anger means His just punishing of sin, so His unlimited anger signifies no other than His just proceeding in punishment, to the utter destruction of inflexible sinners; and to this is opposed here, His *correcting with judgment*, that is, in a fatherly, gracious moderation, such as does not utterly ruin and cut off, but indeed reclaims and converts sinners unto Him.

This submission and yieldance to a measured correction, is a thing most reasonable: they that know any thing aright of themselves and God, will not refuse it.

First, reflecting on their own sinfulness, which, when truly discovered, even where there is least, yet is there enough of it to justify even utter destruction. Therefore have we good reason unrepiningly to receive such moderate correction from the hand of God as He thinks fit, and to wonder that it is no more. It is one true character of repentance under the rod, to *accept the punishment of our iniquity*, to have our untamed spirits brought low, to stoop to God, to acknowledge our punishment to be far less than our iniquity, and that it is of His goodness *that we are not consumed*, as the Church confesses, Lam. iii. 22. Though we feel it heavy, and the measure hard, yet self-knowledge and conscience of sin will lay the soul low, and make it quiet, so that it will say nothing, or if any thing, it will be confession of its own guiltiness and the righteousness of God; still clearing Him in all, as it is, Psal. li. 4, and using that other, Psal. cxix. 137; whatsoever is so inflicted, *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and just are Thy judgments.* Which words a good king used, being put in prison, and hardly dealt with. So the Psalmist, Psal. xxxviii. 3: *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin.* He justifies God's anger by his own sin. Thus Daniel makes confession for this people, under the very captivity here threatened, when it had lasted out the full term. See Dan. ix.

And knowing our sin, ought we not to allow God the clearing of His own justice, His purity and hatred of sin, in punishing it? And, possibly, He will punish sin most exemplarily here, in those who are nearest Him, His own people and children; He can least endure it there. This, especially, when we consider His sovereignty and great-

ness, that He is tied to no account of his actings; and though we did not see so clear reason for our sufferings in our deservings, there is reason enough in His will. And this, well considered, would bring us to much humble submission in all. *I was dumb*, says David, *I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it.* Psal. xxxix. 9. The bishop of Troyes meeting Attila marching towards the city, asked who he was. *I am*, said he, *the scourge of God.* Upon this, he set open the gates to him; but God marvellously restrained the soldiers in that city.

But yet further, as our own guiltiness, and God's righteousness and greatness, plead for this compliance with His chastisements, so even His goodness, and our own profit in them. There is in His chastising of His own people very much mercy, that they *may not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. xi. 32. Their afflictions have a secret stamp of love on them; *By this is the iniquity of Jacob purged*, &c. He purifies a people in His furnace, that they may be holy unto Him; gives His own many sweet experiences of secret support and comfort in affliction, and seasonable delivery out of it, and brings them forth with advantage. *The peaceable fruits of righteousness.* Heb. xii. 11. He humbles and purges a people, or a person, by His rods, and prepares them for greater mercies, to enjoy them both more sweetly and usefully; renews His covenant and the mutual endearments of love betwixt Himself and His people, according to the gracious promises made to His people, in relation to this very judgment here threatened, and after inflicted on them. See Isa. liv.; Ezek. xxxvi.

We, possibly, think it strange that our pressures and troubles still continue, and rather grow upon us than abate; but we judge not wisely concerning this, the most part cursing and repining, others falling into a dead, hopeless stupidness, not caring what becomes of things. But our best course were, to turn to Him who smites us, to acknowledge our rebellions and His justice, to eye men less and God more, in our sufferings, and to confess that our provocations exceed all that is come upon us; to fall down humbly before God, and take submissively His chastisements, saying, *Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment;* and with the Church, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.* Mic. vii. 9.

Thus, likewise, in private personal correctings, let us learn to behave ourselves meekly and humbly, as the children of so great and good a Father; whatsoever He inflicts, not to murmur, nor entertain a fretful thought of it. Besides the undutifulness, and unseemliness of it, how vain is it! What gain we by struggling and casting up our hand to cast off the rod, but the more lashes? Our only way is, to kneel and fold under His hands, and kiss His rod, and, even while He is smiting us, to be blessing Him, sending up confessions of His righteousness, and goodness, and faithfulness, only entreating for the turning away of his wrath, though it should be with the continuing of our affliction. That is here the style of the Prophet's prayer, *Correct me, O Lord, but not in anger.* And, according to this suit, even where troubles are chastisements for sin, yet a child of God may find much sweetness, reading much of God's love in so dealing with him, in not suffering him to grow wanton and forget Him, as, in much ease, even His own children sometimes do. And as they may find much of God's love to

them in sharp corrections, they may raise and act much of their love to Him in often-repeated resignments and submissions of themselves, and ready consenting to, yea, rejoicing in His good pleasure, even in those things which to their flesh and sense are most unpleasant.

Now, to the *petition*, the averting of His anger. That is the great request of them who know and fear Him; and there is high reason for it. The heaviest sufferings are light without it, but the least ingredient of that adds inexpressible weight to the smallest affliction. This was the thing, it is likely, which made the visage of death so sad to holy men in Scripture, David, Hezekiah, &c., that in those times it had some character of God's anger against them upon it; came to them as a messenger of displeasure. So a thing, small in itself, may be a great curse. To be cast out unburied is no great matter. Natural men slight it: *Cælo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.* There is little difference, to lie eaten of beasts above ground, or of worms beneath. Yet, when foretold to a man as a judgment denounced from God, as against that king, Jer. xxii. 19, it hath its own weight, carrying some stamp of God's despising him. And though a man feels it not when it is done, yet he feels it, looking on it beforehand, especially as threatened of God; sees himself, as it were, dragged about and torn.

Now, if any little particular cross, marked with God's present anger, becomes so heavy, how much more is His abiding, prolonged wrath, the thing here spoken of—*anger*, to which no bound is set! That, says he, in the name of his people, *would bring me to nought.* There is no standing before it; it will make the stoutest and proudest to shake, yea, shakes them to pieces. If the *wrath of a king* be to meaner men *as the roaring of a lion*, (Prov. xix. 12,) how much more terrible, even to kings themselves, is the wrath of God! This great King, whose voice shakes the mountains, and makes the earth to tremble, armies of terrors and deaths are nothing to a look of His angry countenance. *If He withdraw not His anger, the proud helpers stoop under Him.* Job ix. 13. The helpers of pride, the great Atlases of the world, who are thought to bear up all, those who, for their wit and power, are thought the supporters of the kingdoms, how soon are they crushed to pieces by a touch of this anger of God, and *perish at the rebuke of His countenance! O Lord*, says that holy man, Psal. xc. 11, considering the frailty of poor man, and the power of God, *who knows the power of Thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath;* full as much, yea, far more terrible than we can apprehend it.

They who dare go on in ways wherein it may be but suspected that He is against them, Oh! they know Him not. Let us consider, and fear before Him; and, for the land, still entreat the turning away of His wrath, rather than deliverances from any pressures: Lord, while Thou thinkest good further to afflict us, so as to draw us nearer to Thee, we are content, yea, we will bless Thee; but whatsoever Thou do with us, suffer not Thy hot displeasure to arise against us, for then we are undone. So this is all a soul under His hand, in affliction, ought to say, *Correct me, but not in wrath, lest thou bring me to nothing:* Thou knowest I cannot stand before that. He is pleased to look to this, and to express it as that which moderates His anger, even when justly incensed; Isa. lvii. 16: *I will not contend for ever, neither will*

I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. Lord, if Thou wilt, how quickly and how easily couldst Thou break into pieces, or sink into nothing, not only me, a little atom of it, but the entire frame of this whole world; and, therefore, strive not with me. This Job often represents, and God is pleased to move Himself to restrain His wrath, and draw forth His mercy by it. His great compassion lays hold on such considerations. See Psal. lxxviii. 38, 39, and Psal. ciii. 14. And this may furnish great confidence to souls under a sense of wrath, that do but fall down and entreat for mercy. He who so often prevents us, when we seek it not, will he cast any one away who seeks and sues for it?

The *diversion* of this anger, briefly relates to the heathen, the professed and obdurate enemies of God and His Church: *q. d.* Thy wrath, O Lord, may have its course, and yet spare Thy people. There is matter enough for it round about, that is good for nothing else; and good reason for it, besides all other wickedness, their spite and cruelty against Thy people: *For they have eaten up Jacob.*

Note the character of the ungodly, who are fit fuel for this fire, *That know not, and call not on Thy name;* that profess not, pretend not to be Thine. Tremble, you who are too like these, though reputed amongst the people of God. Seek the knowledge of God, and worship Him, families and persons, lest this curse come upon you.

Now, this is a prophetical foretelling of the utter destruction of the Church's enemies, whereas the Church is *corrected in measure*, and not destroyed. She is first punished; but they that come last, the enemies, the heaviest wrath falls down there, and smothers them, ends on them, and makes *a full end* of them. Jer. xxx. 11. The belief of this may uphold the faithful in the Church's greatest distresses. When at the lowest, then the wrath is nearest changing place and removing to her enemies.

And this is to be so desired and prayed for, in reference to the implacable enemies of God, that we should beware we mix nothing of our own interest or passion with it. As wrath in God is without any disturbance, *æstuas et tranquillus es*, so somewhat like is the desire of it in the godly, a calm, undistempered love of the name of God. And so shall the saints rejoice in the final victory and triumph of Christ over all his enemies, and their final ruin in that day when they shall be made his footstool. Then they shall have a pure complacency and delight in his justice; that shall make all even. And why are we disquieted, if we hope for that day?

SERMON XXV.

Isaiah xxx. 15—18.

For thus saith the Lord God, the holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not.

But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses, therefore shall ye flee: And we will ride upon the swift, therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one: at the rebuke of five shall ye flee, till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.

In the sentence of that greatest and biggest judgment that ever yet came on the world, the universal deluge, as we have it Gen. vi., that word doth most lively express the reason of it, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* For thus it is, while He spares even His own people, He is at a continual strife with them by gracious entreaties and mercies, by advices, and warnings, and threatenings, still contesting; that is the way He uses in the contest, on His part, against refusals, and revolts, and rebellions on their part. Thus here.

The question betwixt Him and His people here, is about the help of Egypt: this God often declares to be wholly against His mind and their own good; yet they on all occasions had so strong a mind to it that they could not be diverted. The Prophet here hath his message concerning this point, to preach it, and to write it, to remain *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, as they speak, *that it may be for the time to come, for ever and ever;* ver. 8; shews them plainly, that this course was wholly without the counsel and consent of God, yea, directly against it, and that it should succeed accordingly: *The strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion;* it shall prove to you according to its name, *a land of distress and trouble*, instead of help. And if you would know what would suit that other name of Egypt better, that were humble yieldance to God, and confidence in Him: your *Rahab*, your best *Egypt*, your truest *strength* were, *to sit still.* Ver. 7. This is here again represented to them, so gladly would he reclaim them.

For thus saith the Lord.] The words have, 1st. God's express *advice* to His people. 2dly, Their peremptory *refusal* of it. 3dly, His just *sentence* passed upon their obstinacy. The *advice* is prefaced with the usual words of the prophets, *Thus saith the Lord;* for in that lies the dignity and authority of the message. His advices, doubtless are the choicest and the safest; yea, His counsels are all commands, requiring duly the most absolute obedience.

The Lord Jehovah.] Were but His word known to be *His*, and taken so, how would our souls melt, and yield to the impressions of it, when we read or hear! Oh! learn to hear Him, to take every word of His as from His own mouth, every time the law is read, as if thou heard it from Mount Sinai. So think, Now God commands me to fear Him, as if you heard Him speaking from heaven. That would level more our opinion of men, and make less difference of his messengers.

Another word of His style is here added, *The holy One of Israel.* This is much to be considered by His people, the holiness of His nature, and withal, the nearness of His relation to them, and so, the reverence and obedience we owe Him, our deep engagement to holiness, as His people, His children. This is His image in us, if we are truly such. All His sons and daughters are like Him, *holy as He is holy.* The blind, base world thinks it a word of disgrace, but the

great God owns it as a chief point of His glory, a diamond of His crown, and frequently expresses it as one of the titles He most delights to be known by, *Holy, Holy, Holy.* And as this is beheld, the heart cannot but be filled with reverence, and holy fear, and self-abasement; as this Prophet here, in seeing the vision, and hearing that voice, *Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone.* Isa. vi. 5.

This is here used fitly to scare His people from rebellion, the unholy way on which they were so bent; and the rather because they were grown weary of it, and desired not to hear this word. Ver. 9. Therefore it is the more repeated; *Because ye despise this word,* ye shall hear it the more. Ver. 12. The prophet will neither be mocked nor threatened out of it; he will both deliver his message, and give the King who sent him His own title. And Oh, that we knew Him according to it, and understood what this means, *The holy One of Israel!* He was a holy man, and knew something, who yet confesses his own ignorance in that point: (there must be some knowledge of it, to discover ignorance of it:) *I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy.* Prov. xxx. 3.

In returning and rest.] In leaving off the pains ye take in messages and journeys to Egypt, in humbly and quietly composing yourselves to wait on Me, and trust in Me; submitting to My hand, in what I bring upon you, and from the same hand, Mine alone, expecting deliverance in due time.—This does not bar the use of all lawful means, but as it shuts out perplexing cares and turmoil even in those good means, so it expressly forbids all intermeddling with all unwarranted ways, such as God doth not direct us to, but rather dissuades us from.

And if this be the safest way, surely it is the sweetest, easiest way. There cannot be any thing easier than to be quiet and sit still, to rest and trust, and so be safe and strong. And as it is in this particular, so generally, it is in all the ways of God; they are the only easy, peaceable, sweet ways, with the least pains, and the surest advantage. And the ways of disobedience, besides what comes after, are, even for the present, more turbulent, laborious, perplexed ways. What a hurry and pother are men put in, to serve their lusts, or their ambition, when, if they attain their object, it does not quit the cost and the pains; besides that of their hopes mock them, and after long pursuit, they embrace a shadow. Thus men woo their own vexation, and take a great deal more pains to be miserable, than they would be put to, to make them happy. What a pity to pay so dear for nothing, to give their riches and treasures, and to be at pains too to carry them to *a people that shall not profit them* (*et oleum et operam*), both their expense and travel laid out to no purpose! The voluptuous, or covetous, or ambitious, how do they project, and drudge, and serve their wretched lusts, who, when they have done one piece of service, are still to begin another! And what is the profit of all, but shame and sorrow at last? The humble, sober-minded Christian saves all that pains, and hath his heart's desire in quietness and confidence*. His great desire and delight is, God; and, by desiring and delighting, he hath Him. Psal. xxxvii. 4: *Delight thou in the Lord, and He shall*

* Vacat temperantia. Sed non habebunt requiem, qui bestiam adorant. SENECA.

give thee thy heart's desire—HIMSELF; and then, surely, thou shalt have all. Any other thing *commit to Him, and He shall bring it to pass.*

Strange! men might have God at an easier rate than the poorest vanities they are hunting after, and yet they will not; a full fountain of living waters is ready provided, yet they will be at pains to hew out little cisterns, which, after all their pains, are but *broken cisterns, and can hold no water.*

I know not what men are doing, still at work, when they might better sit still, troubling themselves and all about them, and cannot well tell for what. Oh, the sweet peace of believing and obeying God! They truly conquer, sitting still: *Sedendo vincebant.* In all times, they are safe under the shadow of the Almighty; are *strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.*

And ye would not, but said, No.] Thus men sometimes flatly reject His counsels, and when they are not so gross as plainly to speak it out, yet say so in doing so, and for good manners' sake will blanch it with reproaching the messengers; will have it to be not God's mind, but men's own fancy, a false vision; will own nothing for truth but what suits their humour and design. First, they resolve on their course without acquainting God, ask not His advice; then, when He is pleased to give it by His messengers, they reject it, not under that name, as God's advice, but will not have it pass for this, because it crosses their already-determined course. If it favoured that, then, no question, it were welcome enough as His word. That is meant by those words, ver. 10: *Which say to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.* And so they used Jeremiah long after, in this very point. Jer. xlii. 2. And so they go on to take their own course: *No, but we will flee upon horses.*

And this is the nature of carnal hearts; they are generally inclined to rebel, and take a way of their own, casting away the counsels of God, as not suiting with the State, or with wit, or points of honour. They find more feeling and real substance in sensual things than in the promises of God: these seem airy, unsure things to them; therefore, they would still see apparent means, and where these fail, think it but a fancy to rest on God. They dare not trust Him so but as withal to do for themselves, although nothing can be done but what He forbids, which therefore cannot be done without giving up with Him, and departing from their trust on Him. All this cleaves to us, and much cause have we to suspect ourselves, when it is but doubtful that there appears little or no evidence of God's counsel or good-will to a business, but rather clear characters of His dislike, and much of our own will, a stout, uncontrollable bent to it; when we are conscious to ourselves of this, that either we have not asked advice of God at all, or very slightly, not being much upon our knees with it; or, possibly, in asking His advice, have brought our answer with us, in our own breasts, the lying oracle that making answer, and we consenting to delude ourselves, not hearkening to any thing that does not clink and sound to our purpose.

Our hearts are exceedingly deceitful, and particularly in this point

of withdrawing our trust from God, and leaving off to follow Him in His ways, to trust on the arm of flesh, on policy and strength, and self-resolved undertakings, rather than on Him without these. Evil men think that those who advise them to trust on God are silly fellows, who know not what belongs to policy and reasons of state. A fancied wisdom it is, that men are enamoured with, and look not to a higher wisdom, consider not God, that *He also is wise.* Isa. xxxi. 2. There is, I think, in that word a tart scorn of the folly of their seeming wisdom. Be it that you are wits, yet you will not deny some wisdom to God: *Yet He also is wise.* So they think not on His power neither; therefore He puts them in mind, (ver. 3,) that *the Egyptians are men.*

Well, if you be resolved on that course, says God, then, know mine too, that I am resolved upon: *Therefore ye shall flee*, shall have fleeing enough: and if you be *swift, they that pursue you shall be swifter*, and *one* shall serve to *chase a thousand, the rebuke* the very terror of one. This is the condition of the mightiest people and the best appointed armies, when forsaken of God. There is no strength nor courage, nor any thing of worth in any of the creatures, but as it is derived from God: it is dependent on Him in the continuance and use of it. *Why are thy valiant men swept away? They stood not, because the Lord did drive them.* Jer. xlvi. 15. We have seen this, and the turn of it on both sides, how men become a prey to any party, when the terror from God is upon them.

Therefore, learn we to fear Him, to beware of all ways wherein we may justly apprehend Him to be against us. Cleave to Him and to His truth, when it is lowest, and when no human means of help appear, then think you hear Him saying to you, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.*

Ver. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait.*] There is no language of men nor of angels fit to express the graciousness of God's punishments and the threatenings of them; as if they were violently drawn and forced from Him, but mercy, and the sweet promises thereof, naturally flowing from Him. Thus here, He is forced to give up His people to their own counsels, because they will not follow His advices. He entreats them to be quiet, and let Him do for them; but seeing they will not *sit still*, and be safe at His direction, they must run their own course, and fall in it. But it cannot pass so, they must not be quite given over; the Lord hath an interest in them which he will not lose. They must, indeed, for a time eat the fruit of their own ways, and that is not a season to shew them favour; but the Lord will wait a better hope. He is resolved to shew them mercy, and will find His own time for it: *Therefore will* HE *wait, that He may be gracious.*

And this is He moved to, according to His gracious nature, by the greatness of their distress and desolation. Though procured by themselves, by their great, their inflexible stubbornness, yet He pities to see them so *left as a beacon on the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill. And therefore will the Lord wait.* Thus we have the proper arguings of free mercy, which otherwise, to our narrow thoughts, may seem strange and somewhat inconsequent. Such a *Therefore* as this, so unexpectedly changing the strain, doth

genuinely and sweetly follow upon the premises, when free love is the medium: that intervening in the midst, makes the sweet turn. Your iniquities prevail to bring you low, and lengthen out your calamities; *therefore*, I will let that have its course, and will stay till my fit time come to do you good. Meanwhile I will lie hid, and be as sitting still; but when that time comes, I will get up and shew myself. *He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you; for the Lord is a God of judgment.* He is wise, and just, and good, and knows His measures of afflicting His people, His times and ways of delivering them, and of bringing destruction on his enemies, and will not slip this season; and it being so, this certainly follows, that they are *blessed that wait on him.*

Observe, 1. The strong inclination of God to shew mercy. He would willingly have his people to find nothing but ease; He delights in the prosperity of His servants, would have them constantly have a sweet, peaceful, yea, cheerful life, by constant walking in His ways; but they are often the enemies of their own peace, grieve His Spirit, and turn Him to be their own enemy. But He cannot persist in that to His own; He longs to be at His way of mercy and loving kindness again. *He retains not His anger for ever*, because mercy pleases Him. He inflicts judgment for sin, but what He delights in is mercy. Therefore, says the prophet, Lam. iii. 32, 33, *Though He cause grief, yet He will have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies: For He doth not willingly afflict the children of men.* Though He doth *grieve them*, yet, *not willingly;* they themselves procure and draw on that, by *grieving His Spirit.* But He willingly shews mercy, for that abounds: there is such multitude and plenty of it, that, as to full breasts, it is a pleasure to Him to let it forth. The two words, *gracious* and *merciful*, which stand first in the name of God, Exod. xxxiv. 6, the one signifies *free grace*, the other, *tender bowels of mercy.* This is no emboldment to continue in sin, yea, it is of all things the most fit encouragement and inducement to a sinner to return from sin; and so it is used and urged throughout the Scriptures. See Isa. xxxi. 5, 6, and lv. 7; Jer. iii. 12. In public calamities, where a people are charging the cause thereof upon themselves, searching their hearts and their ways, and turning unto God, humbly acknowledging their iniquity, and entreating pardon, Oh! this is the thing He would not despise. Yea, it is what He looks and longs for, and upon that would readily forget all past disloyalties. See Jer. iii. 1. Yea, at the sound of their repentings, His bowels would resound with compassion by a secret sympathy and harmony, as one string, well tuned to another, stirs when it is touched. Thus, Jer. xxxi. 18—20.

This a sinner shall find in his returning unto God, more than we can express or promise in His name. Oh, *He waits to be gracious*, meets thee graciously. Yea, He hath first touched thy heart secretly, hath first drawn it towards Himself, before it stirred, or had a thought that way. Now no more upbraidings or remembrance of all thy wanderings: an act of perfect oblivion is past. *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* Jer. xxxi. 34. Is thy heart any little softened, and relents it towards Him? Then, the con-

troversy is ended, and His thoughts are now, how to comfort thee. Art thou busy indicting accusations against thyself? Then makes He it His part to wipe away and blot out. Comest thou home with a heart full of holy shame and grief, and thy mouth full of humble confessions of thy disobedience? Then know, it is thy tender-hearted Father meets thee, most ready to forgive thee, yea, to interrupt thy confessions in the middle with embraces and kisses of love.

But, alas! we preclude ourselves from the sweet experiences of these tender mercies, by the hardness of our hearts, and by the lightness and vanity of them. Oh that indignity, our God still *waiting to be gracious*, to heap up more of His love to us, but we are busied in other things, and not at leisure to wait on Him! Oh! what are they, these things that take us up? Great matters? Alas! sorry trifles, all day long. And when we are at leisure, yet we are not at leisure; for then we must take our ease, must go to sleep, and so still He is put off and forced to retire, after he has stayed till *His head be filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night.* Cant. v. 2.

Observation 2. The Lord doth most exactly and wisely measure both the degree and the time of His people's afflictions. Though they have brought them upon themselves, and justly He might leave them so, this He will not do: He is *a God of judgment.* This is largely and sweetly expressed, in a resemblance of husbandry, Isa. xxviii. 24—29. He knows how much and how long outward or inward trouble is fit for every one, and where the less will serve, will not use the more. He knows what need some spirits have to be bruised and broken beyond others, either under disgrace or poverty, or the proper pressures of the spirit within, apprehensions of wrath, or withdrawments, at least, of comforts; and hath set His days for deliverance of His church, and of every believer under affliction. So, the style of the prophet, *In that day*, speaking as of a certain prefixed day, and that, no power or wit of man can disappoint. And it is so chosen, as it shall be evident to be the fittest, that it could not so well either have been sooner or later; all things concurring to make it most seasonable to His people, and honourable to his own name. Hab. ii. 3, *The vision is for the appointed time: though it tarry, wait for it; it shall come, and shall not tarry.* That is strange, *Though it tarry, it shall not tarry.* But in the original, there are two words, the one importing an undue slowness, or constrained retardment: that cannot be so, *it shall not tarry, though it tarry;* that is, though it stay itself, and come not till the *appointed time:* so the other word signifies. Thus, Psal. cii. 13, *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the set time is come.* Now, for this the Lord waits. It is not through want of love, but from abundance of wisdom, that He delivers not sooner. He hath chosen the fittest time, in His all-discerning wisdom; yet, there is in His love, an earnest kind of longing that the time were come. Thus here, *He waits to be gracious*, and He *will be exalted*, will cheerfully and gladly raise up Himself, and appear to shew mercy to His people, and bring His enemies low; coming forth, as it were, to judgment, and sitting down on His throne. In which posture He was not seen while they prevailed and triumphed, and His Church were under their oppression; but when the time of their restoring and consolation

comes, He then is to sit on His throne, and so is exalted to shew them mercy. Hence the Psalmist so often desires that the Lord would arise, and utters predictions, assuring that He will arise, and exciting his people to rejoice in that. Psal. ix. 7, 8, and Psal. xcvi., xcvii., and xcviii.

Thus, the Church, in her saddest condition, ought hopefully to remember and rest on it, that the day is determined, and cannot fail. Our salvation is in God. He laughs at His enemies, when they are at the top of prosperity and pride; sees that their day is coming. Now, certainly, the firm persuasion of this would much stay our minds; but either we do not believe, or we do not improve and use these truths, and draw that comfort from them which abounds in them. Our God loses no time: *He is waiting* till His appointed time. And if *He wait*, it becomes us so to do. That is our duty here, *to wait on Him.* This faith does, and so, makes not haste; neither goes out to any undue means, nor frets impatiently within at the deferring of deliverance, but quietly rests on God, and waits for Him. This, as it is our duty, is also our happiness; and thus it is here expressed. Upon consideration that *the Lord waits to be gracious, and will be exalted to shew mercy*, the prophet is carried to this acclamation, in respect to the happiness of believers, *O! blessed are they that wait for Him!* Their thoughts fall in and meet with His; for He is *waiting* for the same day they *wait* for, and if he be not disappointed, they shall not. We are naturally irregular in our affections and notions, and the only right ordering of them, is, by reducing them to conformity with the ways and thoughts of God, which keep an unalterable, fixed course, as the heavens: the way, I say, to rectify our thoughts is, to set them by His, as clocks and watches, which so readily go wrong, too slow or too fast, are ordered by the sun, which keeps its course. Oh! that we were more careful to set and keep our hearts in attendance on God, winding them up in meditation upon Him, and conforming them in their motions and desires to His disposal in all; for all that concerns us, and for the times of all, being quiet, yea, glad in this, which the Psalmist makes his joy, *My times are in Thy hand, O Lord.* Psal. xxxi. 15. And surely, that is the best. Were I to choose, they should be in no other hands, neither mine own, nor any others. Alas! what silly, poor creatures are we! How little do we know what is fit for us in any kind, and still less what time is fit for any mercy to be bestowed upon us! When He withholds mercies or comforts for a season, it is but till the due season; it is but to ripen them for us, which we in childish haste would pluck green, when they would be neither so sweet nor so wholesome. Therefore it is our wisdom and our peace, to resign all things into His hands, to have no will nor desires, but only this, that we may still *wait for Him.* All shall be well enough, if we but get rid of the vain hopes and expectations of this world. None who indulge them are so well but they are still waiting for somewhat further. Now, amidst all that, our soul may say with David, and speak it to God as known to Him, that it is so indeed: *And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.* My *expectation* or *waiting*, (the same word that is here,) *is all placed upon Thee.* Is it so, brethren? Are our hearts gathered in from other things, to this

attendance, while the most about us are gaping for the wind? Have we laid all up in God, to desire and *wait for Him*, and pretend to nothing beside Him?

I would do so, may a soul think, but can I hope that He will look on me, and bestow Himself on such a one as I am? To that I say nothing but, look on His word. If thou thinkest that warrant good enough, here it is for thee, that they are certainly *blessed that wait for Him*. This is assurance enough. Never was any one who *waited for Him*, miserable with disappointment. Whosoever thou art that dost indeed desire Him, and desirest to *wait for Him*, surely thou resolvest to do it in His ways, wherein He is to be found, and wilt not willingly depart from these; that were foolishly to disappoint thyself, and not to be true to thine own end. Therefore look to that; do not keep company with any sin. It may surprise thee sometimes as an enemy, but let it not lodge with thee as a friend.

And mind this other thing, prescribe nothing to God. If thou hast begun to wait, faint not, give not up, wait on still. It were good reason, were it but upon little hope at length to find Him: but since it is upon the unfailing assurance, that in the end thou shalt obtain, what folly were it, to lose all for want of waiting a little longer! See Psal. xl. 1. *In waiting I waited—waited, and better waited*—but all was over paid: He did hear me. So Psal. cxxx., *I wait and wait until the morning*. These two joined are all, and may well go together, *earnest desire*, and *patient attendance*.

These words, as others of the prophet, which we call *consolations*, I conceive, look beyond the deliverances from outward troubles, to the great promise of the *Messiah*. Sure I am, the strain of something following is too high for that, and cannot but have an aspect to the days of the Gospel, as that ver. 26. Now, the Lord *had* set His time, that *fulness of time* for the coming of the blessed Son in the flesh; and till that time *came*, the Lord was *waiting to be gracious*, to open up His treasures more fully than ever before; which when He did, then *was He exalted to shew mercy*, and exalted in shewing mercy. Christ himself was lifted up on the cross, there to shew that rich mercy that is for ever to be admired: lifted up to shew his bowels, as the word is here. Did he not let us see into his heart, there to read that love that can no otherwise be uttered? And in that, the Lord was most eminently manifested a *God of judgment*, wisdom, and justice, and mercy, all shining brightest in that contrivance. There he was lift up, and then, after that, lift up into glory, who is the *Desire of the nations*, the salvation and joy of all ages, both before and after. Before he came, they were from one age to another *waiting*; and more particularly at the time of his coming, God stirred up the expectation of believers to welcome him, being so near. See Luke ii. 25, 38. And in all times, before and after that, he is the happiness of souls, and *they* only *are blessed that wait for Him*. Whether you do, or do not, believe it now, the day is coming, when all the world shall know it to be so.

SERMON XXVI.

Jeremiah xiv. 7—9.

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against Thee.

O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a way-faring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night.

Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not.

If we look backwards and forwards in this chapter, we find the three great executioners of God's anger on the world foretold, as having received commission against this people.

In all troubles, felt or feared, this is still the great resource of them who are acquainted with it, and can use it, Prayer. And their labour in it is not altogether lost, even where judgment is determined and unalterable, as here it was; for some mitigations of time and measure are desirable, and by prayer attainable; and whatsoever there is of that kind, the prayers that have been made long before, have had a concurrence and influence in it. And always, at the least, Prayer carries the personal good of them that present it: if it return unto their bosom, as David speaks, without effect for others, it returns not thither empty, it brings peace and safety thither with it; they save their own souls. The mourners, if they turn not away the destroyers' weapons from the city, yet, they procure one sent along with them, with an ink-horn for their own marking and sparing, Ezek. ix. 3. And were there nothing in this, nor any following effect, Prayer hath within itself its own reward. Did we know it, we should think so. The very dignity and delight of so near access to God, to speak with Him so freely, this in itself is the most blessed and honourable privilege that the creature is capable of; it is a pledge of heaven, something of it beforehand, a standing in pretension to the life of angels: *Angelorum candidati*, as Tertullian speaks: it is to be but *a little lower*, as the word is, Psal. viii. 5. Many practise a form; few know the vital sweetness of it.

Oh, my brethren, be aspiring to more heavenliness, and a higher bent of the soul in it than as yet you know, and use it more that way; use it for yourselves and others, this whole land, these kingdoms, the Church of God through the whole earth. No times that we have seen, wherein it hath been more needful, and none wherein less plentiful. There is no one that *stirs up himself to lay hold on God.* Some, no doubt, there are in these times; yet, so few, so general a decay and negligence in the zeal and frequency of prayer, that, to speak of, there is none. And is it not so now with us? Many discourse one to another, and yet, most to little or no purpose: but little is spoken where nothing would be lost, in humble supplication to God. And this is the saddest sign of that long lasting trouble. Oh! pity the kingdom and yourselves, and learn to pray.

This prayer of the Prophet is made up of the two usual ingredients, *confession* and *petition*.

O Lord, Jehovah.] A chief point of prayer is, the presenting of the soul before God, remembering to whom we speak, that it is to the great King, the holy God; which this expresses, where it is indeed, when we say, O LORD, or should remind us of, when we forget it, to have such apprehensions as we can reach of His glorious majesty. Consider, if we find our hearts filled with Him when we are before Him. Oh! how seldom think we that He is God, even while we speak to Him, and how quickly do we forget it, and let slip that thought! When we have any thing of it, how soon are we out of it, and multiplying vain words! For such are all those we utter to Him without this. Oh! pray to be taught this point of prayer, and watch over your hearts in prayer, to set them thus when you enter to Him, and to call them in when they wander, and pluck them up when they slumber, to think where they are, and what they are doing.

Our iniquities testify against us.] Confession fitly begins. All the difference betwixt God and us lies in this, *our iniquities*. Now, humble confession is one great article of pacification; it is a thing judgment certainly aims at, a thing mercy is mainly moved with. See Hos. v. 15. Psal. xxxii. 5. Jer. xxxi. 18.

When we are to encounter any enemy or difficulty, it is sin weakens us. Now, confession weakens it, takes away the power of accusations, anticipates the great Accuser, leaves him nothing to say, takes off the stroke of sins testifying against us, says, You need not, I confess all, and more than you can say.

For this, a right knowledge of God's law is requisite, and then a diligent use of it; laying it to our ways, as a straight rule to shew our unevenness, which, without it, we discern not. Set that glass before you, but withal beg light from Heaven to see by; otherwise our applications to this work of searching our hearts, and comparing them with the law, is but poring in the dark, where nothing is to be seen of our spots though we set the glass before us, and open the leaves of it. *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord;* Prov. xx. 27; but it is so when He lights it, and directs a man by it into himself, to see the secret corners and pollutions that lie hid within him. Sin discovered by this light, appears in its native vileness, and that makes lively resentments and confessions.

Their confession of sin is varied here in three several expressions, and no one of them is empty; the adding one to another, testifying a deep sense, and each of them having much under it, when issuing from an awakened, sensible mind.

Our iniquities testify against us.] This expresses a deep and clear conviction. Our iniquities are undeniable; they stand up and give in witness against us, and we cannot except against them, nor deny the charge they lay.

And thus it shall be with all transgressors in their day, and with each of us. It is not far off, our particular day, it is coming, when the most ignorant and impudent shall be forced to know, and the most obstinate and impudent shall be forced to acknowledge their iniquities. Such as now will not be warned and convinced, who hide their sin as men, like Adam, who shew themselves in that his children, they (as he was) shall be called for, and forced to come out of the thickets,

and convicted of their disobedience. This men find sometimes in a day of distress, when some outward or inward pressure seizes on them, lays on the arrest, and brings them to stand and hear what these witnesses have to say against them. However, there is a day coming for this at the long-run, a day of particular judgment for each one, and that great solemn day for altogether: the light of that fiery day shall let them see to read the bill they would not look on sooner. If men would consider this, when sin is speaking them fair and enticing them, in how different a style it will afterwards speak, it would spoil the charm of it. As Solomon speaks of the *strange woman*, that *her end is bitter as wormwood*, (Prov. v. 4.) so are all the ways of sin. Those same sins which looked so pleasing and friendly, and entreat thee, shall appear again in another tune, and with other language, to witness against thee, and cry for vengeance. Men think sin evanishes as it is acted, and forget it as if they were to hear no more of it, and know not that it shall be forthcoming again, even thoughts, words, and actions. All is kept for a court-day, *iniquities sealed up in a bag*, as Job speaks, as writs to be produced in the process against thee. Oh, how little know you what the amazement is of a man's sins surrounding him, and testifying against him, that he is a rebel against God, and to be condemned! And no scarcity, such multitudes of them, one company succeeding another, as that word, Job x. 17: *Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me;* not by twos or threes, but by thousands, armies of them. This is more affrightful than to be encompassed with drawn swords, or to see a whole army march up upon a man, it were nothing to these bands mustered up. So, Psal. l. 21: *I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*

There is no way to escape but by prevention, taking a day beforehand to judge thyself, and call these witnesses, and hear them, and pass sentence. This would save the labour. God is desirous to have the matter thus anticipated, and turns it over to thee, to judge thyself, that He may not judge. Why defer we? It is not worth the while and the pains? And then for that day, when it would seem so terrible to have these witnesses stand up, thy safety is, having judged and condemned thyself, to take sanctuary in Christ, and make him thy advocate to answer all for thee. He can and will do it to the full; yea, he hath already answered all that thy sins, were they many more, can say. Oh, happy the man that takes this course! Sin not upon this account: none surely will do that. *These things I write unto you,* saith the Apostle, *that ye sin not;* but then, *if any man* not so minded, *do sin*, here is that comfort, *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* 1 John ii. 1.

Our backslidings are many. This is the double dye of His people's sins; they are not simple transgressions, but treacheries, revolts, breaches of promises, of covenant and vow, turnings back, goings out from God, adultery, prostituting their hearts to idols, to base lusts; a heart professed to be married to its Maker, running a gadding after strange vanities. And who of us hath not this sadly to say against himself?—How often have I vowed myself Thine, and with some kind of hopes and purpose to have been true to it; but how soon hath all evanished! Oh! the unspeakable unfaithfulness, not only of com-

mon formal professors, but of real believers! And these provoke God highly, go most to His heart, to be slighted by His own, to whom he hath so particularly shewn Himself and imparted of His love.

And we have sinned against Thee.] This that comes last seems to sound least; but I take it as meaning most: as if they would have offered at particular confession, and then seeing such a huge multitude, and no end, were forced to retire, and shut up all in this general word, We might and would speak of many things, but they are too many, we are overwhelmed. What shall we say? *We have sinned against Thee.* Thus Job, *I have sinned against Thee; what shall I do unto Thee?* As in David's confession, Psal. li. 4: *Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned;* THEE, the great, the holy God, our God. This were our business, instead of much discourse and debate of things, to fall down and confess unto God; to begin at ourselves, our own breaches and backslidings, and then to add the public national guiltiness. Oh! we are a sinful people, and few lay it to heart. All ranks are highly guilty; and where are they who retire and mourn for their abominations? Those continued and multiplied, are the continuers and multipliers of our plagues, sword, and pestilence, and threatenings of famine. If you have a mind to do any thing for the land, and for yourselves, your families and little ones, Oh! apply to this work, to confess and bewail our iniquities. It may be, yea, I dare say, it shall be, the Lord will return and have mercy on us.

O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us.] In all our approaches unto God, it is a prime thing to take Him up according to His name. This is the very ground of access and confidence of sinners, and there is no coming near Him without it. We have heard it, that *He is the Lord, merciful and gracious,* &c. Not so much as confessions can be made without this, much less petitions presented. Instead of coming to fall down before Him, to acknowledge sin, the soul will run quite away, and, though that were in vain, would seek to hide itself, that it might not at all appear. But apprehending His goodness and readiness to forgive, this draws the heart to Him, and being drawn in, this makes it melt before Him.—In this some Christians mistake much, when they hold off from the apprehensions of God's graciousness, to the end that they may be the more humble and deeply affected with their sins. No, no: this is that which warms, and softens, and makes the soul pliable, fit to receive any form from His hand. Therefore the people of God, and the prophets in their name, still lay hold on that, and interweave it both with their confessions and their petitions, as the main ground of their confidence, in presenting both.

The petition is in these two words, which begin and close—*Do for us—Leave us not.* The rest is argument, backing and pressing the petition with familiar and pathetic expostulations; and in them, the whole strength of the argument lies in a mutual interest, that they are His people, and He is their God. But take the words as they lie.

Do Thou for Thy name's sake.] It is not expressed *what* or *how,* and it is best so: that is referred to Him who knows what is best, which we do not. It is an act of grace in general that is sued for, but for the way and time, all is put in His hand. True it is, that

sometimes prayer is, and must be, somewhat more particular upon particular warrant, or upon account of the common liberty that God gives His children, to present freely the particular thoughts and desires of their hearts to Him. But it is good always to close thus, or that it be understood so when not expressed, that we resign that matter to Him, to make His own choice of things, and use His own way. Only, we entreat His favour, and His owning of us and our condition, that He be for us, and do for us. And this is safe and sweet, to let Him choose. We often perplex ourselves about that which lies not in our way, and is not our part to be busied in, what things shall be done. This he undertakes for, and will be careful of. Be not afraid. Psal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way, roll thy way upon the Lord, trust on the Lord*, and He will do it; there is no more. In the Hebrew it is, Turn it over to Him, and be quiet, and let Him alone, He will do well enough. Besides that there is all reason for it, if men knew what peace of spirit there is in this resignation, they would choose it before any way that can be thought on, and it never yet repented any one who chose it.

For Thy name's sake.] This is the unfailing argument, which abides always the same, and hath always the same force. When nothing is to be said for ourselves but guiltiness, yet, this name we may plead by. *Though our iniquities testify against us*, though they return us harsh answers as from Thee, speaking nothing but just refusals of our suits and rejecting of ourselves; yet, Lord, remember Thy own name, and from thence we look for a better answer. *Do* according to that, and *for Thy name's sake*, in regard of strangers and enemies, who will reproach Thy name in the ruin of thy people; and *for Thy name's sake*, in regard of Thy people's knowledge of it, and confidence in it, who, in all their straits, do expect their help from Thee. Thy promises made to them, and Thy covenant made with them, in these is *Thy name*, and they do cast themselves, and rely on it. Now see whether it may be for thy glory to cast them off. Whatsoever *we* are, look to Thine own interest, and do for that; *Do, for Thy name's sake.*

In the next clause, and more particularly, a part of His name is expressed, *The Hope of Israel.* That is a piece of His royal style, by which He is known in the world. And in this appeareth the wonderful condescension and bounty of God to His creatures, to choose a number of persons, that He will pass His word to engage Himself to be theirs; not only to forgive us who are His debtors by our sins, but to become Himself a debtor to us by His promises. And He loves to be challenged on them, and pressed with them. It is a maxim of court-flattery, that mean persons ought not to urge a king upon his word; but this greatest King takes nothing better from the meanest of his subjects. Lord, Thou hast undertaken the protection of us Thy people, and now it lies upon Thee, in point of honour and truth, to save us.

The Hope of Israel.] All people, and every man, have something they rely on and make their hope; and they often choose the most broken, rotten hopes, which fail while they lean upon them, and not only fail, but hurt them, as Egypt proved to Israel. Therefore it proved as a *broken reed*, which not only flew in pieces in their hand,

but the splinter ran up into their hand and hurt them. How often have we found it thus, been disappointed, yea, wounded by our vain hopes, *pierced through with many sorrows*, as the Apostle speaks of those who love and trust in riches! Therefore Job disclaims this, that he never made gold his god: *If I made gold my hope.* Ch. xxxi. ver. 24. There is a word of one of his friends speaking, chap. xxii. ver. 25, rendered in our translation, *The Almighty shall be thy defence:* the word is in the original, *The Almighty shall be thy gold.* To those who account and make Him so, He is both; for they are rich enough in Him in the greatest scarcity, and safe enough in Him in the greatest danger.

But you who would look to it, inquire each of you well, what is thy hope, what thy heart readiest turns to, and cleaves to, to comfort itself in any distress. Yea, in the times of the greatest ease, what are thy thoughts most biassed and turned to, with oftenest and deepest delight? Canst thou say, It is to God?—that thy heart hath got that retreat, and is inured to that, is frequently there throughout the day, turns by, or passes over husband or wife, or children, or riches, or delights, or any thing that would stand in thy way, and stays not till it be at Him, and there rejoices in His love, sits down under His shadow content and happy, willing that others should rule and share the world as they please? that thou dost not envy them, yea, canst even pity them, with all their gay hopes and great projects? yea, though thou do not find at all times, yea, possibly, scarcely at any time, that sensible presence of God, and shining of His clear-discovered love upon thee, yet that still He is thy hope, that thou art at a point with all the world, hast given up all to wait on Him, and hope for Him, and dost account thyself richer in thy simple hope, than the richest man on earth is in his possessions? Then art thou truly so, for the hope of God is Heaven begun, and Heaven complete is the possessing of Him.

The Saviour thereof.] Not exempting them from trouble, but saving *in time of trouble.* The reason for Israel's trouble lay in their own sin and security, and their abuse of ease and peace: but yet, they were not left to perish in trouble, but had *a Saviour in time of trouble*, who was then most eyed and considered, and found to be so. In the furnace, both the faith of His people, and the truth of His promises, are tried.

The children of God are much beholden to their troubles for clear experiences of themselves and of God. And in this, indeed, is the virtue of faith, to apprehend God as *a Saviour in time of trouble*, before He come forth and manifest Himself to be so.

Wicked men have their *times of trouble* too, even here, but have no title to this *Saviour.* *Suæ fortunæ fabri*—if themselves, or friends, or means can help them, it is well; but they can go no further. But the Church, the Israel of God, when all help fails on all hands, has one great resource that cannot fail, the strong God, her *Hope and Saviour in time of trouble*, or straitness. When there is no way out, He can cut out a way through the sea, can divide their enemies, or whatsoever is their greatest difficulty, and make a way through the middle of it. Well might Moses say, *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help?*

Deut. xxxiii. 29. Men are under-saviours in outward deliverances; so it is said, Neh. ix. 27: *Thou gavest them saviours;* But He is THE SAVIOUR. All others have their commissions from Him. All their strength and all their success, is from Him. Without Him, no strength, nor wit, nor courage, avail: all falls to pieces when He withdraws His hand. *Give us help from trouble, for,* says the Church, *vain is the help of man.* We have found this, if any people ever did, and have had real lectures to teach us to *cease from man; for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Yet, still we are ready to look to multitudes, or to the quality of men who undertake for us. But if we do so, yet shall that prove our shame and disappointment: and it shall never go well with us, till our dependence and confidence come clear off from all creatures, and we fix it entirely upon Him who is *our shield and our strength.*

Thus should a soul in particular distress, especially in inward trouble, wherein the help lies most incommunicably and immediately in God's own hand, learn to trust Him. And though thou art not clear in thy interest as a believer, yet, plead thy interest as a sinner, which thou art sure of. God in our flesh hath enlarged the nation of Israel; all that will but *look to him,* He is their *Saviour: Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth.* Now, He hath styled himself the Saviour of sinners; press Him by that: Lord, I do *look to thee,* do for me, O *Saviour!* Help, I am in trouble. So, in any particular temptation, either to sin, or to distrust because of sin, say, Now, Lord, here is an opportunity for Thy power and Thy grace to glorify itself. And though thou find thyself sinking, yet believe, and thou shalt not drown.

Why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land?] The main thing desired was, His constant abode with them. Some passing deliverances he had wrought; but that was not enough. He came *as a stranger, to stay a night,* refreshed them with a transient visit, and away again. Thus we may say, He hath still done for us. When we were in desperate straits, He came and helped; but then we were left to such counsels as bred us new troubles. He hath not so evidently yet taken up His residence, though he hath built Him a house amongst us, we trust, with that intention, to dwell with us. This we are to sue and entreat for.

Why art thou as one astonished?] Why art thou looking on our miseries as an amazed stranger, as not concerned in our affairs or condition, and not caring what becomes of us; *as a traveller,* but passing through, and having no further interest nor regard; or, *as a mighty man that cannot save,* as Samson after his hair was cut, either as wearied or bound, or somewhat hindered, though strong enough.

Now, Lord, look not on. Own our sufferings, and bestir Thyself. Make it appear that *Thou faintest not, neither art weary,* nor that any thing can stand before Thee and be Thy hinderance. Break through our sins, the greatest hinderance of all; let not these stop Thy way, nor bind Thy hands. For *Thou art in the midst of us:* though we see Thee not so in Thy work as we desire, yet, here we know Thou art in Thy special good-will and power, as Thou art in our profession and homage done to Thee as our king amongst us. That testifies Thy

presence. Thou canst not so hide Thyself, but there are still some characters of Thy presence. *And we are called by Thy name, Thy people.* If we perish, Thy name being upon us, what becomes then of *it?* Therefore leave us not. Though Thou strike us, yet stay with us, and we shall live in hope of favour and deliverance: if Thou go not away, our cries and prayers, at least our miseries, will move Thee.

These things make up our plea. We are a most unworthy people, yet, we are called by His name, are in covenant with Him; so, His glory is interested. We must not let go this. And what advantage so great as to have our interest wrapped up in His? His glory and our safety are in one bottom, to sink and swim together; then, there is no hazard. Therefore, keep close to His interest and His covenant, and beg His staying with us, and arising for us, and lay hold on Him for this end. It is a pleasant violence; and were there many to use it towards Him, our deliverance were not far off.

SERMON XXVII.

Luke xiii. 1—9.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it;

And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

It is no easy or common thing, to give God's ways a right construction. For the most part we either let them pass unobserved, or unframe our observations, looking through those principles and passions of our own, which give things another shape or colour than what is truly theirs. This was here the case. This sad accident should have been observed by them who heard it, and might have been spoken of by them to very good purpose; but our Saviour knew well what they meant by reporting the story, and what thoughts they had of it and of themselves, and by his answer, it would seem, all was not right with them.

The fact here related, we have not any further account of in sacred history, nor any thing that we can clearly and certainly call it in any human writer. It is commonly conceived to have been done at Jerusalem, where Pilate abode, and that his power was exercised and done

upon the followers of that Judas of Galilee spoken of, Acts. v. 37, being such as denied it to be lawful to give obedience to the Roman empire, or to offer sacrifice for the interest and good of it. When they, it is likely, were coming together to offer at Jerusalem, and to maintain and to spread their opinion, Pilate comes upon them, and, while they were at the solemnity, makes a sacrifice of them to that authority they refused to sacrifice for: whether justly or not, we cannot determine; our Saviour does not; but if it was just, surely it was very tragical and severe, suitable to that character Philo gives of *his* disposition who acted it. [Ἀμείλικτον.] The straining of justice, commonly breaks it: a little of the other side, is, of the two, doubtless, the safer extreme.

However, this stroke and all others, as they come from the Supreme Hand, are righteous. Whatsoever be the temper or intent of the lower actor, and whatsoever be the nature of the action, as from him, the sovereign hand of God is in them, and chief in them. Amos. iii. 6: *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* And yet all evils, as *He* doth them, are both good and well done. Actions, whether voluntary or casual, as these two here, yet do powerfully issue from the First Being and Worker, and, as from Him, are both unalterably certain and unquestionably just. Thus they who here report it seem to have judged of this passage, that it was a just punishment of sin. And our Saviour contests not about that, but rather seems to agree to them so far, and draws that warning out of it: he only corrects the misconceit it seems they were in, in thrusting it too far off from themselves, and throwing it too heavy upon those who sacrificed.

Think ye that they were sinners?] Though it were an error to think that all temporal evils are intended of God as punishments of some particular guiltiness, and so to be taken as infallibly concluding against either persons or causes as evil, yet, certainly, the hand of God, either upon ourselves or others, is wisely to be considered, and it will very often be found a punishment pointing to the sin. And it is certainly an argument of very great stiffness and pride of heart, not to observe and acknowledge it, and a sure presage either of utter ruin, or, at least, of a heavier stroke. Any one who is set against the Lord, and will not be humbled, whether by what he sees on others, or what he feels on himself, shall find he hath an overmatch to deal with, that will either bow him or break him. Isa. xxvi. 11: *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of Thine enemies shall devour them.*

Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem?] Our Saviour goes not to search into the quarrel, and to condemn or justify either the one party or the other; that was not for his purpose. His aim was to rectify the mistake of those he spoke to, and to draw forth from their own relation what was most proper for their use. Much of our hearing and telling of news, hath little of this in it; and with most persons it doth not relish, to wind things that way. Some, even good persons, do accustom themselves, and take too much liberty, to an empty, fruitless way of entertainment in this kind. And if we make any remark, it commonly keeps abroad, comes not home to ourselves. Be it a judgment, be the persons great sin-

ners in a sinful course, yet, they are not always the greatest of all because they suffer and others escape, as we readily think, and the Jews here concluded concerning these Galileans.

God is to be adored and reverenced, who useth His own freedom in this; He does injustice to none, yet chooses them on whom He will do exemplary justice, and whom He will let pass, and gives no account of this to any. Some less wicked have been ensamples to them who were much more wicked than they.

Do not flatter yourselves in the conceit of exemption from some stroke which others in the same way with you have fallen under, or even from some course which others have run and smarted in, and bear yourselves big upon the name of *God's people*. But tremble before the Lord, and search your own hearts. And let us think, though we may not be guilty of such public scandalous evils as others fall into, and are punished for, yet how full are we of secret malice, pride, and lust, &c., and let us wonder at the patience of God to ourselves, while multitudes have been swept away round about us. Think you that they who have died by sword or pestilence of late, were greater sinners than we who are left behind? Oh, no! *but except we repent, we shall all likewise perish.* Enough of these arrows are still in God's arsenal, and though He use not these to us, yet remember, death, and judgment, and eternity are before us, and they call for wise and speedy consideration and repentance.

Oh! you that go on in your transgressions after all that is come upon us, who were drunkards and swearers, and are so yet, what think you? Because the heat of public judgments is abated, is there no more fear? Have you made a covenant with hell and death, and gained quarter of them that they will not seize on you? Oh! that will never hold: they will not, they cannot keep to you. And if you hold on your course when the day of visitation shall come, how much heavier shall it be by all this forbearance! You shall wish you had been cut off with the first. The day is at hand, when it shall be easier for them than for you. Only, the advantage is, that there is an exception yet sounding in your ears; *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

I beseech you, my brethren, enter into your own hearts, and be not always out of yourselves, and so out of your wits. Consider the Lord's ways and your own, and wonder at His goodness. Why am not I made an example to others, as well as so many have been made examples to me? Now let me fall down at His feet, and beg of Him, that as He hath not made me an example of justice all this while, He may now make me an example of mercy and free grace to all that shall look on me.

Our Saviour, to their reported instance adds another himself, which was no doubt late and recent with them, to the same purpose, and in the same strain: *Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Not just after the same particular manner, but the likeness is in *perishing*,—You shall as certainly perish as they are perished. And this, to many impenitent sinners, is verified in their being cut off, even by some temporal judgment, after long-abused

forbearance, and often very like those they have seen instances of and would not be warned by. Thus, it was fulfilled to many of the Jews, in the death of many thousands of them, and the destruction of their city by the Romans, in which there was much likeness with the two explanatory judgments here mentioned. But the universal and far more dismal *perishing* of unrepenting sinners, is that death which lies unseen on the other side of that death we see and are so afraid to look on. Oh! saw we the other, this would appear nothing: it would be the only terrible of all terribles indeed. And how terrible soever, it is the unfailing attendant of impenitence. These God hath linked together, and no creature can sever them, continuance in sin and perishing, repentance and life. It is faith, indeed, that lays hold on our pardon and life in Christ, and by that we are justified and saved; yet, so as this is still true, so that the other no wise crosses it, that there is no life without repentance. And this wrongs not the Gospel at all, to preach and profess repentance; yea, it is a prime point of preaching the Gospel. And here we find the Great Preacher of the Gospel, who is himself the great substance and subject of the Gospel, this is his doctrine, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* There is no right preaching of the Gospel, but the doctrine of repentance must be in it: the drawing and turning of the soul to God, from whom it is gone out by sin, this the Gospel aims at. And there is no right preaching of repentance, without the Gospel. The Law indeed discovers sin, but that is not enough to work repentance: for that, there must be a door of hope opened to a sinner, at which he may come in, hoping to be pardoned and accepted upon returning and submitting. This the Gospel alone does. And whensoever the prophets preached repentance, there was somewhat that always expressed or imported the notion of the Gospel, God declaring Himself reconciled, ready to forgive and receive him.

Now, not to speak of the nature of repentance, which here were pertinent, I shall only desire you to seek to know the nature of it, by feeling the power of it within you*. Oh! happy they that do! Were the sweetness of it known, we might persuade most by that; but that cannot be known, till we be persuaded and brought to repentance,—the delight there is in those tears, the pleasure in crucifying sin, even the most pleasant sins. The soul, then in its right motion when turning towards God, finds itself moved sweetly; but it is thrown, and distorted, and disappointed in turning from Him and following sinful lusts. But here, necessity is the argument, the highest necessity. If it may be necessary for you *not to perish*, then it is necessary for you to *repent*. Had any of you an ulcer, though painful to be lanced, yet, if told *it must be*, else you would die, that would make a man call for it and entreat it. Lord, what is the madness of the minds of men! Do we believe that there is such a thing after all that is here, as *perishing* and *being saved*, eternal death and eternal life, and can we think on any thing else, so as to forget these, or to be negligent and unresolved concerning them, and yet, eat and please the flesh, and seek to make other things sure, and leave these to their hazard? The God who made your hearts, persuade them! For who else can?

* *Malo sentire compunctionem, quàm scire ejus definitionem.* I would rather *feel* compunction, than know its *definition*. [Thomas à Kempis.]

The parable that follows, teaches the same doctrine of repentance, and that upon the motive of *patience* and *forbearance*. *He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard.* Particulars should not be overstrained and squeezed for morality. The main is, God's dispensation, and His expectation in His orchard, the Church.

Our Saviour is much in this way of teaching. He calls in natural things to serve spiritual ends; and so all are fit to do, had we the faculty to extract it. A spiritual mind draws that which is symbolical with it, out of all. Such may fruitfully walk in gardens and orchards, and feed on the best, though they stir nothing. The great Lord is Himself the planter of His vineyard; His own hand sets each tree. And the soil is fruitful, there is sap and moisture. This is to be understood of His visible Church and ordinances; for the planting here signifies that. Christians are often compared to things living, growing, and fruitful; as to the vine and fig-tree, Isa. v., &c. There is high engagement to be so, and real Christians are truly so.

And he sought fruit thereon.] Good reason had he so to do, having so planted it. Those trees which are left wild in the barren wilderness, no fruit is to be expected on them; at least, no garden-fruit, such as grows in the garden of God. Some natures have some kind of fruit, and some, sweeter than others, but they are but wild figs. God's delight is to *come into His garden*, and there *eat His pleasant fruits*. Cant. iv. 16. Natural men may, after their fashion, be temperate, and patient, and charitable; but to believe on God, and love Him above themselves, and from such principles to do all they do, this is not to be expected.

Now, all that are planted in the Church of God, are, in name, such trees as should have their sap in them, that is, faith and love, and bear answerable fruits: they are called *trees of righteousness, and planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified*. Isa. lxi. 3. He himself knows who are indeed such, and knows that the rest can bear no such fruit; yet, in regard of outward dispensations and their own profession, He speaks after the manner of men; *he comes and seeks fruit*. Men who think they may live in the face of the Church, and make use of her ordinances, and yet be as excusably barren of all the fruits of holiness, as if they grew upon a common heath, it is strange they should not conceive their own folly, and know that God reckons otherwise, and according to the ground that he hath set them in, and the manuring He bestows on them, looks for some suitable fruit.

But the most are thus. They consider not what they are; think it a kind of impertinent importunity, to press them to holiness, to meekness, to bearing wrongs, to heavenly-mindedness, to spiritual activity, and usefulness to others. Why, it is strange. What think ye, my brethren, are we Christians, or are we not? We have a name that we are active, and are dead. Congregations are filled with such; and when the Lord *comes and seeks fruit*, in the greatest part He finds none. If lies, oaths, and cursings were the fruits, there are enough of these; but zeal for God, love to our brethren, self-denial, humility, if these be they, alas! where are they? So much preaching, sabbaths, fasts, and covenants; and where is fruit, *the fruits of the Spirit*? Oh!

there are empty leaves, and some promising greenness, but the most belie the hope they give. And we of this land, who are engaged so high, what could have been done more for us? Though lying far north, yet have we much of the Gospel sunshine, and are bound by our own promise, and covenant, and solemn oath to God, to be more fruitful. Yet this is still broke. Who that had seen our first meltings into tears, or fair buds of stirring zeal, could have imagined we should have been so barren?

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard.] Now the conference with the vine-dresser about it, though that is much for the fulness of the parable, yet may imply God's imparting of His thoughts concerning His Church, to His faithful ministers. Such are included under that name here. For He blames not the vine-dresser as negligent, but complains of the barrenness of the tree. In the cutting down, there may be some pointing at church censure, but I conceive, it is rather to express God's purpose concerning the barren tree, than to give order or command about it. Doubtless, the Lord would have His vine-dressers sensible of the fruitlessness of His trees, though it be not by any notable neglect on their part.

These three years.] This expresses the great patience of God, that spares so long, and speaks not of *cutting down* at the very first. Thus, of long time hath He waited on many of us, many more years than to the strict number here named; on how many of us a great part of our lifetime! Whence is it that we are not afraid of this word here sounding, as it were, in our ears?—*Cut it down: why troubles it the ground?* As if He should say, It takes up room, and does no good, yea, hinders and prejudices others, as all ungodly, fruitless persons in the Church of God do.

The vine-dresser entreats and obtains one year more. This, the faithful labourers of God will not fail to do: to preaching to His people, they will join much prayer for them, that they may be made fruitful, and meantime, be spared and not perish in their unfruitfulness. They will double their endeavours in the sense of that danger; to all other pains will add this, the watering of them with tears. God is gracious, and easy to be entreated, and forbears yet, and waits. Oh! it is not too late. Any of you that at length are stirred up to any real desires of fruitfulness to Him, I dare give you warrant to be confident, not only of His forbearing upon such a desire, but of His favourable acceptance of it as a good sign, yea, as already a beginning of fruit. Indeed, in case of people's remaining barren after all, the end will be to be *cut down;* and to every fruitless and godless person amongst you, it is not long to that day; it will be upon you before you are aware. As John preached, *The axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* Matt. iii. 10. God is taking His axe, as it were, and fetching His stroke at you, and you know not how soon it may light, and you be cut down, and cut off from all hopes for ever, never to see a day of grace more, nor hear a sermon more,—cut down and cast into the fire to burn, and that never to end. Oh for some soul to be rescued, were it even now! Oh! *To-day, To-day, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*

Real Christians, though not altogether barren,—that is impossible, yet, are not so plentifully fruitful; there is little of *the increase of God*, such as He may be invited to His garden for, such as the vine-dressers may rejoice in, yea, the Master himself. The Lord maketh a kind of boast of us, as men will do of trees in their gardens, that they have much fruit, though possibly a meaner appearance and show than most of the rest. Oh, what a joy and glory were it to our God, to have unobserved, obscure Christians abounding in sweet spiritual fruits, laden with fruit, and hanging down the head, stooping the lower, still the more humble for it; referring all to Himself, living to Him, doing all for Him! But alas! we are empty vines, bringing forth fruit to ourselves, serving our own wills and humours, and barren to Him. But for this end are we *planted in the house of God*, and ingrafted into the Son of God, that blessed, living Root, to be fruitful to His praise. It is His credit: *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples*, John xv. 8.

Now, for this are requisite, 1*st*, Much prayer. For though here He speaks as an ordinary master, yet it is His secret influence which does all. Hos. xiv. 8: *From Me is thy fruit found;* and prayer draws down that. 2*dly*, Much faith in Christ, living to him, and drawing sap from him. Such as do all in his strength, and are much in application and attraction, shall be found the most abundant in all choice and sweet fruits; they who *abide in him*, that is, who, in the very actings of faith, are more in him than many others who yet are *in* him. But, alas! this is a thing of which men speak much, and know little.

SERMON XXVIII.

PREACHED BEFORE MY LORD COMMISSIONER AND THE PARLIAMENT, 14TH NOVEMBER, 1669.

JOHN xxi. 22.

——What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.

Of all that ever lived on earth, the most blessed was this handful and small company our Lord chose for his constant attendants, to see his divine miracles, enjoy his sweetest company, and to hear his divine doctrine. What a holy flame of love must have burned in their hearts, who were always so near the Sun of Righteousness! It was indeed a sad hour, wherein that was eclipsed, and the Lord of life lay dead in the grave. And what a deluge of joy was in their hearts when he rose again! And what a transport was it when they saw him ascend, and a shining cloud kissing his feet, and parting him from them! In the interval, as he had risen himself, so, he is raising them from their unbelief. St. Peter, not content with a bare forsaking of his Lord, had also denied him. But he falls not a quarrelling, but speaks of love to him, and blows up these sparks of love with this threefold question, *Lovest thou me?* St. Peter answers fervently, but most modestly, whereupon his Lord gives him a service suitable to his love, *Feed my sheep;* for which none are qualified but they that love him. But when

he grows bold to ask a question, he gets a grave check, and a holy command, *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.* This was a transient stumbling in one who, but lately recovered of a great disease, did not walk firmly. But it is the common track of most, to wear out their days with impertinent inquiries. There is a natural desire in men to know the things of others, and to neglect their own, and to be more concerned about things to come, than about things present. And this is the great subject of conversation. Even the weakest minds must descant upon all things; as if the weakest capacities could judge of the greatest matters, by a strange levelling of understandings, more absurd and irrational than that of fortunes! Most men are beside themselves, never at home, but always roving. It is true, a man may live in solitude to little purpose, as Domitian catching flies in his closet. Many noisome thoughts break in upon one when alone; so that when one converseth with himself, it had need be said, *Vide ut sit cum bono viro.* A man alone shall be in worse company than are in all the world, if he bring not into him better company than himself or all the world, which is, the fellowship of God and the Holy Spirit. Yet, the matters of the Church seem to concern all, and so indeed they do; but every sober man must say, all truths are not alike clear, alike necessary, nor of alike concernment to every one. Christians should keep within their line. Whether it be the will of our Great Master, that the order that hath been so long in the Church continue in it, or not, *What is that to thee?* It is certainly a great error, to let our zeal run out from the excellent things of religion, to matters which have little or no connexion with them. A man, though he err, if he do it calmly and meekly, may be a better man than he who is stormy and furiously orthodox. Our business is to follow Jesus, and to trace his life upon earth, and to wait his return in the clouds. Had I a strong voice, as it is the weakest alive, yea, could I lift it up as a trumpet, I would sound a retreat from our unnatural contentions and irreligious strivings for religion. Oh! what are the things we fight for, compared to the great things of God? There must be a great abatement of the inwards of religion, when it runs wholly to a scurf. God forbid any should think, that except all be according to our mind, we must break the bond of peace. If we have no kindness to our brethren, yet, let us have pity on our mother, and not tear her bowels. And, indeed, next to the grave and the silent shades of death, a cottage in some wilderness is to be wished for, to mourn for the pride and passion of mankind. How do the profane wretches take advantage from our breaches! But, if there be such here, because of the weakness, folly, and passions of some men, is it folly to follow Jesus? Are some ridiculous, and for that, will you turn religion into ridicule? If you do, it will at least turn to a *Sardonic* laughter. Because we contend for a little, is the whole an invention? Will the pillars be brangled, because of the swarms of flies that are about them?

There is an Eternal Mind that made all things, that stretched out the heavens, and formed the spirit of man within him. Let us tremble before Him, and love the Lord Jesus. Our souls have indelible characters of their own excellency in them and deep apprehensions of another state, wherein we shall receive according to what we have done

upon earth. Was not Jesus, the Son of God, declared to be such by his miracles, but chiefly by his resurrection from the dead? Hath there not been received and transmitted to us, through all ages, many martyrs following him through racks and fires, and their own blood, to his glory? And shall we throw off all these? Better be the poorest, weakest, and most distempered person upon earth, with the true fear of God, than the greatest wit and highest mind in the world, if profane, or, though not such, if void of any just or deep sense of the fear of God. *For a living dog is better than a dead lion.* Some religious persons are, perhaps, weak persons, yet, in all ages, there have been greater nobles and more generous souls truly religious, than ever were in the whole tribe of atheists and libertines.

Let us, therefore follow the holy Jesus. Our own concernments concern us not, compared to this. *What is that to thee?* may be said of all things besides this. All the world is one great impertinency to him who contemplates God and his Son Jesus. Great things, coaches, furniture, or houses, concern the outward pomp or state of the world, but not the necessities of life; neither can they give ease to him that is pinched with any one trouble. He that hath twenty houses, lies but in one at once. He that hath twenty dishes on his table, hath but one belly to fill. So it is, *ad supervacua sudatur.* All are uncertain: sudden storms fall on, and riches fly away as a bird to heaven, and leave those who look after them, sinking to hell in sorrow.

A Christian is solicitous about nothing. If he be raised higher, it is that he desires not: if he fall down again, he is where he was. A well-fixed mind, though the world should crack about him, shall be in quiet. But when we come to be stretched on our death-bed, things will have another visage. It will pull the rich from his treasure, strip the great of his robes and glory, and snatch the amorous gallant from his fair, beloved mistress, and from all we either have or grasp at. Only sin will stick fast and follow us. Those black troops will clap fatal arrests on us, and deliver us over to the jailor. Are these contrivances, or the dark dreams of melancholy? All the sublimities of holiness may be arrived at, by the deep and profound belief of these things. Let us, therefore, ask, Have we walked thus, and dressed our souls by this pattern?

But this hath a nearer aspect to pastors, who should be copies of the fair original, and second patterns, who follow nearer Christ. They should be imitating him in humility, meekness, and contempt of the world, and particularly, in affection to souls, feeding the flock of God. Should we spare labour when he spared not his own blood? How precious must the sheep be, who were bought at so high a rate as the blood of God! Oh, for more of this divine and evangelic heat, instead of our distempered heat. This is the substance of religion, to imitate Him whom we worship. Can there be a higher or nobler design in the world, than to be God-like, and like Jesus Christ? He became like us, that we might be more like him. He took our nature upon him, that he might transfuse his into us. His life was a track of doing good, and suffering ill. He spent the days in preaching and healing, and often the nights in prayers. He was *holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners.* How then can heirs of wrath

follow the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world? Humility, meekness, and charity were the darling virtues of Christ. He came to expiate and to extirpate our pride; and when that Majesty did so humble himself, shall a worm swell? No grace can be where the mind is so swelled with this airy tumour. He was meek, and reviled not again; nor did he vent his anger, though he met with the greatest injuries. The rack of his cross could make him confess no anger against those who were draining him of his life and blood: all he did was to pray for them. Charity was so dear to him, that he recommended it as the characteristic by which all might know his disciples, *if they loved one another*. But alas! by this may all know we are not his disciples, because we hate one another. But that we may imitate him in his life, we must run the back-trade, and begin with his death, and must die without him. Love is a death. He that loves, is gone and lost in God, and can esteem or take pleasure in nothing besides Him. When the bitter cup of the Father's wrath was presented to our Lord, one drop of this elixir of love and union to the Father's will, sweetened it so, that he drank it over without more complaining. This death of Jesus mystically acted in us, must strike down all things else, and he must become our all. Oh, that we would resolve to live to him that died, and to be only his, and humbly to follow the crucified Jesus! All else will be quickly gone. How soon will the shadows that now amuse us, and please our eyes, fly away!

SERMON XXIX.

MATTHEW xxii. 37, 39.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

THE wisdom and meekness of our Saviour is the more remarkable, and shines the brighter, by the malice of his adversaries; and their cavils and tempting questions, occasion our benefit and instruction. Thus was it here.

We see, the words are the sum of the whole Law, and they are taken out of the book of the Law. They are called *two commandments:* the former is the sum of the first, the latter, of the second table. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. That is*, says our Saviour, *the first and great commandment.* Our first obligation is to God, and then, through Him and for His sake, to men.

The second is like unto it.] Seems it not rather contrary than like to the former? Whereas in the former, the whole stream of love is directed in one undivided current towards God, this other commandment seems to cut out a new channel for it, and to turn a great part of it to men: *Thy neighbour as thyself.* No, they are not contrary if we take them right; yea, they do not only agree, but are inseparable. They do not divide our love, but they set it in its right course; first, wholly to God, as the sovereign good, and only for himself worthy to be loved; and then, back from Him, it is, according to His own will,

derived downwards to our neighbour. For then only we love both ourselves and others aright, when we make our love to Him the reason and the rule of both*. So then, our love is not to be immediately divided betwixt Him and our neighbour, or any creature, but is, first, all to be bestowed on Him, and then He diffuses, by way of reflection, so much of it upon others as He thinks fit. Being all in His hands, it is at His disposal; and that which He disposes elsewhere, (as here, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,*) it is not taken off from Him, but abiding still in Him, as in its natural place, (as light doth in the sun,) flows forth from Him by such an emanation as divides it not; as beams flow forth from the sun and enlighten the air, and yet, are not cut off from it.

So then, the second is like unto the first, because it springs from it, and depends on it. It commands the same affection; love, in the former, placed on God, and in this, extended from Him to our neighbour. And it is like unto it in this too; that, as the former is the sum of the first Table, and so, the first and great commandment, so this is the sum of the second Table, and therefore next unto it in greatness and importance.

All the precepts that can be found in the Law and the Prophets, are reducible to these, and all obedience depends upon this love. 1. Consider this, how these are the sum of this Law. 2. Consider them particularly in themselves.

Not only because it is love that facilitates all obedience, and is the true principle of it, that makes it both easy to us, and acceptable to God; but besides this, that love disposes the soul for all kinds of obedience, this very act of love is in effect all that is commanded in the Law. For the first, laid to the first Table, it is so much one with the first commandment, that it expresses most fitly the positive of it, opposite to that which is there forbidden: *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me*—but shalt have Me alone for thy God, or bestow all divine affection, and all worship that is the sign and expression of it, upon Me only. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,* and, if thou lovest Me alone, thou wilt not decline to any kind of false worship. That were to vitiate thy affection, and to break that conjugal love and fidelity to which thou art bound by covenant, being My people as by a spiritual marriage. Therefore is idolatry so frequently called, in the phrase of the prophets, *adultery* and *uncleanness.*

And, in the letter of that second commandment, the Lord uses that word which in its usual sense is conjugal, and relates to marriage, *I am a jealous God;* and, in the close of that precept, expresseth particularly this affection of love, as particularly interested in it, though extended to all the rest, *I shew mercy to thousands of them that love me.*

Is it not a genuine property of love, to honour and respect the name of those whom we love? And therefore, it is altogether inconsistent with the love of God, to vilify and abuse His name.

They that understand the true use of that holy rest of the sabbath-day, do know that it frees the soul, and makes it vacant from earthly

* Minus enim te amat, qui aliquid præter te amat, et non propter te. Incipiat homo amare Deum, et non amabit in homine nisi Deum. [AUGUSTINE.]

things for this purpose, that it may fully apply itself to the worship and contemplation of God, and converse with Him at greater length. Then, certainly, where there is this entire love to God, this will not weigh heavy, will be no grievous task to it: it will embrace and gladly obey this fourth commandment, not only as its duty, but as its great delight. For there is nothing that love rejoices in more, than in the converse and society of those on whom it is placed: it would willingly bestow most of its time that way, and thinks all hours too short that are spent in that society. Therefore not only they who profanely break, but they who keep it heavily and wearily, who find it rather a burden than a delight, may justly suspect that the love of God is not in them; but he that keeps His day cheerfully, and loves it, because on it he may more liberally solace and refresh himself in God, may safely take it as an evidence of his love to God.

Now, that, after the same manner, the love of our neighbour is the sum of the second Table, the Apostle St. Paul proves it for us clearly and briefly, Rom. xiii. 9, 10. All the commandments touching our neighbour, are for the guarding of him from evil and injury. Now, *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore, Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* He that truly loves his neighbour as himself, will be as loth to wrong him, as to wrong himself, either in that honour and respect that is due to him, or in his life, or chastity, or goods, or good name, or to lodge so much as an unjust desire or thought, because that is the beginning and conception of real injury. In a word, the great disorder and crookedness of the corrupt heart of man, consists in self-love: it is the very root of all sin both against God and man, for no man commits any offence, but it is in some way to profit or please himself. It was a high enormity of self-love, that brought forth the very first sin of mankind. That was the bait which took more than either the colour or the taste of the apple, that it was desirable for knowledge: it was in that, that the main strength of the temptation lay, *Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* And was it not deep self-love to affect that? And it is still thus: though we feel the miserable fruits of that tree, the same self-love possesses us still; so that, to please our own humours and lusts, our pride, or covetousness, or voluptuousness, we break the law of God, the law of piety, and of equity and charity to men. Therefore the Apostle, foretelling the iniquities and impieties of the last times, *that men should be covetous, boasters,* &c., and *lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God,*—sets that on the front, as the chief, leading evil, and the source of all the rest—*lovers of their ownselves: Men shall be lovers of themselves,* therefore, *covetous;* and *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,* because *lovers of their ownselves.* 2 Tim. iii. 2. Therefore, this is the sum of that which God requires in His holy Law, the reforming of our love, which is the commanding passion of the soul, and wheels all the rest about with it in good or evil.

And its reformation consists in this, in recalling it from ourselves unto God, and reflecting it from God to our brethren. Loving ourselves sovereignly by corrupt nature, we are enemies to God, and haters of Him, and cannot love our neighbours but only in reference to ourselves, and so far as it profits or pleaseth us to do so, and not in

order and respect unto God. The highest and the true redress of this disorder, is that which we have here in these two precepts as the substance of all: first, that all our love ascend to God, and then, that what is due to men descend from thence, and so, passing that way, it is purified and refined, and is subordinated and conformed to our love of Him above all, which is *the first and great commandment.*

Here we have the supreme object of love to whom it is due—*The Lord thy God*, and the measure of it, which is indeed to know no measure*—*With all thy heart, all thy soul, and all thy mind.* For which, in Deut. vi. 5, we have *all thy strength.* Luke hath both. The difference is none, for all mean that the soul, and all the powers of it, should unite and combine themselves in their most intense and highest strength, to the love of God, and that all the workings of the soul and actions of the whole man, be no other than the acting and exercise of this love.

He accounts not nor accepts of any thing we can offer Him, if we give not the heart with it; and He will have none of that neither, unless He have it all. And it is a poor all, when we have given it, for the great God to accept of. If one of us had the affection of a hundred, yea, of all the men in the world, yet could he not love God in a measure answerable to His full worth and goodness. All the glorified spirits, angels, and men, that are or shall be, in their perfections, loving Him with the utmost extent of their souls, do not altogether make up so much love as He deserves. Yet He is pleased to require our heart, and the love we have to bestow on Him; and though it is infinitely due of debt, yet He will take it as a gift: *My son give me thy heart.* Prov. xxiii. 26.

Therefore, the soul that begins to offer itself to Him, although overwhelmed with the sense of its own unworthiness and the meanness of its love, yet may say, Lord, I am ashamed of this gift I bring Thee, yet, because Thou callest for it, such as it is, here it is; the heart and all the love I have, I offer unto Thee, and had I ten thousand times more, it should all be Thine. As much as I can, I love Thee, and I desire to be able to love Thee more. Although I am unworthy to be admitted to love, yet, thou art most worthy to be loved by me, and besides, Thou dost allow, yea, commandest me to love Thee. My loving of Thee adds nothing to Thee, but it makes me happy; and though it be true, the love and the heart I offer Thee is infinitely too little for Thee, yet there is nothing besides Thee, enough for it.

The Lord, or *Jehovah, thy God.*] There lie the two great reasons of love, τὸ ἀγαπητον and τὸ ἰδιον—*Jehovah*, the Spring of being and goodness, infinitely lovely; all the beauty and excellencies of the creatures, are but a drop of that ocean:—and, *Thy God*, to all of us the Author of our life, and of all that we enjoy; who spread forth those heavens that roll about us and comfort us with their light, and motions, and influences, and established this earth that sustains us; who furnisheth us with food and raiment, and in a word, (and it is the Apostle's, Acts xvii. 25.) who *gives us* ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα, *life, and breath, and all things;* and, to the believer, *his* God in a nearer propriety, by

* Modus est nescire modum, subtiliùs ista distinguere facile est magis quàm solidum.

redemption and peculiar covenant. But our misery is, the most of us do not study and consider Him, what He is in Himself and what to us; and therefore we do not love Him, because we know Him not.

And thy neighbour as thyself.] If we will not confess nor suspect ourselves, how much we are wanting in the former, yet our manifest defect in this latter will discover it. Therefore, the Apostle, Rom. xiii. 10, speaks of this as all, because, though inferior to the other, yet connected with it, and the surest sign of it. For these live and die together. The Apostle St. John is express in it, and gives those hypocrites the lie plainly: *If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* 1 John iv. 20. We have no real way of expressing our love to God, but in our converse with men and in the works of love towards them.

Certainly, that sweet affection of love to God, cannot consist with malice and bitterness of spirit against our brethren. No, it sweetens and calms the soul, and makes it all love every way.

As thyself.] As truly both wishing and, to thy power, procuring his good, as thy own. Consider how much unwilling thou art to be injured or defamed, and have the same thoughts for thy brother; be as tender for Him. But how few of us aspire to this degree of charity!

Thy very enemies are not here excluded. If self-love be still predominant in thee, instead of the love of God, then thou wilt make thine own interest the rule of thy love; so when thou art, or conceivest thou art wronged by any one, the reason of thy love ceaseth. But if thou love for God, that reason abides still*. God hath commanded me to love my enemies, and He gives me His example; He does good to the wicked who offend Him.

And this is indeed a trial of our love to God. One hath marred thee; that gives thee to think that thou hast no cause to love him for thyself; be it so, self-love forbids thee, but the love of God commands thee to love him. God says, If thou lovest Me, love him for my sake. And if thy love to God be sincere, thou wilt be glad of the occasion to give so good a testimony of it, and find a pleasure in that which others account so difficult and painful.

SERMON XXX.

Hebrews viii. 10.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

The two great evils that perplex sensible minds, are, the guiltiness of sin, and the power of it. Therefore, this new covenant hath in it two promises opposite to these two evils; free pardon to remove the guilt of sin, and the subduing of its power by the law of God written in the heart. Of this latter only for the present. Having spoken somewhat of the sense of the Law in the Ten Commandments, and of the sum of it in Two, this remains to be considered as altogether ne-

* Amicus diligendus in Deo, et inimicus propter Deum. [Augustine.]

cessary for obedience, and without which, all hearing and speaking, and all the knowledge of it, will be fruitless. Though it be made very clear and legible without, we shall only read it, and not at all keep it, unless it be likewise written within.

Observe, in the first place, the agreement of the Law with the Gospel. The Gospel bears the complete fulfilling of the Law, and the satisfying of its highest exactness, in our surety Jesus Christ, so that, in that way, nothing is abated; but besides, in reference to ourselves, though it take off the rigour of it from us, because answered by another for us, yet it doth not abolish the rule of the Law, but *establisheth* it, Rom. iii. 31. It is so far from tearing or blotting out the outward copies of it, that it writes it anew, where it was not before, even *within*, sets it upon the heart in sure and deep characters. We see this kind of writing of the Law, is a promise for the days of the Gospel cited out of the prophet Jeremiah, ch. xxxi. 33.

There is indeed no such writing of the law in us, or keeping of it by us, as will hold good for our justification in the sight of God; therefore, that other promise runs combined with it, the free forgiveness of iniquity. But again, there is no such forgiveness as sets a man free to licentiousness and contempt of God's Law, but, on the contrary, binds him more strongly to obedience; therefore, to that sweet promise of the pardon of sin, is inseparably joined this other of the inward writing of the Law. The heart is not washed from the guiltiness of sin in the blood of Christ, that it may wallow and defile itself again in the same puddle, but it is therefore washed, that the tables or leaves of it may be clean, for receiving the pure characters of that Law of God which is to be written on it.

Concerning this writing, there are three things you may mark. 1. What it is. 2. What is its necessity. 3. Who is its writer.

1. What it is. The writing of the Law in the heart, is briefly no other than the renewing and sanctifying of the heart by the infusion of grace, which is a heavenly light that gives the soul to know God aright. And that is added here, as the same with the writing of the law in the heart, and an illustration of it, *They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.* And this light bringeth heat with it*. That right knowledge of God being in the soul, begets in it love to Him, and love is the same with the fulfilling of the whole Law. It takes up the whole soul: *I will put it their mind, and write it in their hearts.* If we will distinguish these, then it is, that they shall both *know* it and *love* it. It shall not be written anew in their heads, and go no deeper, but be written in their hearts. But we may well take both expressions for the whole soul; for this kind of knowledge and love are inseparable, and where the one is, the other cannot be wanting.

So, then, a supernatural, sanctified knowledge of God, is the Law of God written in the heart. When it comes and entertains Him as holy within it, then it hath not a dead letter of the law written in it, but νόμον ἔμψυχον, the Lawgiver Himself: His name and will are engraven on it throughout, on every part of it. All that they know

* Lux est vehiculum caloris.

of God, shall not be by mere report, and by the voice of others, but they shall inwardly read and know Him within themselves. Which (by the by) makes not the public teaching and work of the ministry superfluous to any, even to those who know most of God, but signifies only this; that all they that do indeed receive and believe the Gospel, are inwardly enlightened by the Spirit of God to understand the things of God, and have not their knowledge on bare trust of others who instruct them, without any particular persuasion and light within, but what they hear of spiritual things, they shall understand and know after a spiritual manner. And the universality of the promise signifies, that this kind of knowledge should be more frequently and more largely bestowed in the days of the Gospel, than it was before.

2. The necessity of writing the Law on the heart. Although there be in the natural conscience of man, some dim characters of the Law, convincing him of grosser wickednesses, and leaving him inexcusable, of which the Apostle speaks, Rom. ii. 15; yet, he is so far, naturally, from the right knowledge of God and the love of His whole Law, that, instead of that knowledge, his mind is full of darkness, and, contrary to that love, his heart is possessed with a natural enmity and antipathy against the Law of God. Eph. iv. 18; Rom. viii. 7. There is a law within him directly opposite, which the Apostle calls the *law of sin*. Rom. vii. 23; sin ruling and commanding the heart and whole man, making laws at its pleasure*, and obtaining full obedience. Therefore, of necessity, before a man can be brought to obey the holy Law of God, the inward frame of his heart must be changed, the corrupt law of sin must be abrogated, and the soul must renounce obedience to it, and give itself up wholly, [εἰς τύπον,] to receive the stamp and impression of the law of God; and then, having it written within upon his heart, his actions will bear the resemblance, and be conformable unto it.

In this promise which God makes to His people, He hath regard to the nature of that obedience which He requires. Because He will have it sincere and cordial, therefore He puts a living principle of it within, writes His law in the heart, and then it is, in the words and actions, derived from thence, and is more in the heart than in them. The first copy is in the heart, and all the other powers and parts of a man follow that, and so, by that means, as it is sincere, so it is universal. The heart is that which commands all the rest; and, as the vital spirits flow from it to the whole body, thus, the Law of God, being written in it, is diffused through the whole man. It might be in the memory, or in the tongue, and not in the rest; but put it in the heart, and then it is undoubtedly in all.

Its being written in the heart, makes the obedience likewise universal in the object, as they speak, in respect to the whole law of God. When it is written only without a man, he may read one part and pass over another, may possibly choose to conform to some part of the Law, and leave the rest; but when the full copy of it is written in his heart, then it is all one Law. And as in itself it is inseparable, as St. James teacheth us, Jam. ii. 10, so, it is likewise in his esteem and

* Tolerabis iniquas interiùs leges.

affection and endeavour of obedience: he hath regard unto all the commandments as one. Because of his love to the Law of God, *he hates*, not only some, but *every false way*, as David speaks, Psal. cxix. 104. He that looks on the Law without him, will possibly forbear to break it while others look upon him; his obedience lies much in the beholder's eye; but he that hath the Law written within, cannot choose but regard it as much in secret as in public. Although his sin might be hid from the knowledge and censure of men, yet still it were violence done to that pure Law that is within his breast, and therefore he hates it alike as if it were public. This is the constant enemy of all sin, this law within him. Psal. cxix. 11: *I have hid Thy law in my heart*, says, David, *that I might not sin against Thee.* It makes a man abate nothing of his course of obedience and holiness because unseen, but like the sun that keeps on its motion when it is clouded from our eyes, as well as when we see it.

In a word, this writing of the Law in the heart, makes obedience a natural motion, I mean, by a new nature: it springs not from outward constraints and respects, but from an inward principle, and therefore, not only is it universal and constant, but cheerful and easy. The Law, only written in tables of stone, is hard and grievous; but make once the heart the table of it, and then there is nothing more pleasing. This Law of God makes service delightful, even the painfullest of it. Psal. xl. 8: *I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.* The sun, which moves with such wonderful swiftness, that to the ignorant it would seem incredible to hear how many thousands of miles it goes each hour, yet, because it is naturally fitted for that course, it comes, as the Psalmist speaks, *like a bridegroom forth of his chamber, and rejoices, as a strong man, to run a race.* Psal. xix. 5. If the natural man be convinced of the goodness and equity of the Law of God, yet, because it is not written within, but only commands without, it is a violent motion to him to obey it, and therefore he finds it a painful yoke. But hear David, in whose heart it was, speak of it: how often doth he call it his *delight* and his *joy!*

If any profane persons object to a godly man his exact life, that it is too precise, as if he wrote each action before he did it, he may answer, as Demosthenes did to him that objected he wrote his orations before he spake them, That he was not at all ashamed of that, although they were not only written, but engraven beforehand. Certainly, the godly man lives by this Law which is written and engraven on his heart, and he needs not be ashamed of it.

It is true, the renewed man, even he that hath this Law deepest written in his heart, yet, while he lives here, is still molested with that inbred Antinomian, that law of sin that yet dwells in his flesh: though the force and power of it is broken, and its law repealed in his conversion, and this new pure Law placed in its stead, yet, because that part which is flesh in him, still entertains and harbours it there, it creates and breeds a Christian daily vexation. Because sin hath lost dominion, it is still practising rebellion against that spiritual kingdom and law that is established in the regenerate mind: as a man that hath once been in possession of rule, though usurped, yet, being subdued, he is still *working* in that kingdom to turbulent practices. But though

by this, (as the Apostle was, Rom. vii. 4) every godly man is often driven to sad perplexities and complaints, yet in this is his comfort; that law of his God written there, hath his heart and affection. Sin is dethroned and thrust out of his heart, and hath only an usurped abode within him against his will. He sides with the Law of God, and fights with all his power for it against the other. That holy Law is his delight, and this law of sin his greatest grief.

3. The Writer: *I will write.* The Lord promises Himself to do this, and it is indeed His prerogative. He wrote it at first on tables of stone, and this spiritual engraving of it on the heart, is much more peculiarly his. Other men might afterwards engrave it on stone, but no man can at all write it on the heart, not upon his own, much less upon another's. Upon his own he cannot, for it is naturally taken up and possessed with that contrary law of sin, (as we said before,) and is willingly subject to it, loves that law, and therefore, in that posture, it neither can nor will work this change upon itself to dispossess that law which it loves, and bring in that which it hates. No man can write this law on the heart of another, for it is inaccessible: his hand cannot reach it, he cannot come at it; how then shall he write any thing on it? Men, in the ministry of the word, can but stand and call without: they cannot speak to within, far less, write any thing within. Though they speak never so excellently and spiritually, and express nothing but what is written on their own hearts, (and certainly, that is the most powerful way of speaking, and the likeliest for making an impression on the heart of another,) yet, unless the hand of God's own Spirit carry it into the hearer's heart, and set on the stamp of it there, it will perish as a sound in the air, and effect nothing*. Let this ever be acknowledged to His glory. The voice of men may beat the ear, but only he who made the heart, can work upon it, and change and mould it as it pleaseth Him. This is His own promise, and He alone makes it good. He writes His Law, on the hearts of His children, and by this work of His grace prepares them for glory. They who have this Law written in their hearts, their names are certainly written in the Book of Life.

SERMON XXXI.

Hosea v. 15.

I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

THERE is nothing we more hardly learn, and whereof we have more need to be taught, than to judge aright concerning our own dealing with God, and God's dealing with us; to know and acknowledge the perverseness and folly of our own ways, and the wisdom and goodness of His ways. Therefore, the sermons of the prophets insist much on

* Sonus verborum nostrorum aures percutit, magister intus. Nolite putare quenquam hominem aliquid discere ab alio homine: admonere possumus per strepitum vocis nostræ, si non est intus qui doceat, inanis strepitus est noster. [AUGUSTINE.]

this, to convince the people of God, to whom they were sent, of both these; and by this to persuade them to repentance. This is evidently here the prophet's aim. The whole chapter with the following, contains a pathetic remonstrance of God's just quarrel with His people, aggravated by much long-suffering and lenity, and many warnings, verbal and real, on His part, and much stubbornness, impenitence, and multiplied provocation on theirs; He using all means to reclaim and save them, and they using all means to despise Him and ruin themselves. The plea is against both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

In these words we have the Lord, after much reasoning and trial of milder ways, which prevailed not with them, concluding upon a severe course, as being found necessary, and such as would be more effectual for their conversion. The words contain these three things: I. The procuring cause of God's afflicting His people. II. His way of afflicting them. III. The end of it.

I. The procuring cause is made up of these two, sin and impenitence. *I will go till they acknowledge their offences.* So that, if they had not committed those provoking sins, or, having committed them, had humbly acknowledged or repented of them, this labour of afflicting them had been saved; but these sins once committed and often repeated, and their being not so much as once acknowledged, and all this by God's own peculiar people, cannot but draw on heavy afflictions.

1*st*. We may see how unwilling God is to afflict His people. Judgments are termed *His strange work*, but mercy is His darling attribute. When God exercises punitive acts against His people, the Scripture represents, as it were, a kind of reluctance and struggling in His bowels. Hos. xi. 8. *How shall I smite thee, O Ephraim? and how shall I give thee up O Manasseh? My repentings are begun already.* He delights in their prosperity, and hath given them a rule, by which if they walk, peace shall be upon them. He hath made them laws, the observance of which will bring heaps of blessings upon them; as we find what a multitude of favours attended it, Levit. xxvi. 4—12. *I will give you rain in due season;* and a little after, *I will give you peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. I will walk among you, I will be your God, and ye shall be My people.* So, also Deut. xxvii. 1—12. But those laws not being observed, then it is said, ver. 24, &c., *The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies*, &c. But what is all that when opposed to the affliction here threatened, of God's withdrawing Himself? *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence.* He will not leave them, unless they drive Him away; yea, and He is even then loth to leave them, and grieved that they are such enemies to themselves, and will not be persuaded to be better advised.

2*dly*. We see where the true blame of the many sufferings and miseries of the Church is to be found. The abounding of sin, and the want of repentance, these make her troubles to abound. If God's own people would take His counsel, it would be well for them; either His first counsel of *obedience*, or His after counsel of *repentance*. When they are running from Him, He calls after them, *Return, return, O backsliding Israel, Why will ye die? Thou hast destroyed thyself*, says

the Lord by the same prophet, *but in Me is thy help to be found.* Hos. xiii. 9. His counsel and ways would be peace, but their afflictions and sharp punishments are the fruit of their own ways; bitter fruit and wormwood, a root of bitterness. Prov. v. 4; Jer. ii. 19. Doth not the preaching of the word, and particularly the doctrine of repentance, sufficiently witness for God, and against His people, when their rebellion brings calamities upon them? The often repeated warnings and entreaties, even to those who have often slighted and despised them, shew how unwillingly He afflicts us. He does not surprise them, without warnings multiplied one upon another. Before He would proceed to treat them as enemies, to hew and slay them with the sword, He uses His messengers of peace to deal first with the word, sharply indeed, but graciously;—that sword of the Spirit which kills to make alive, to spare, if it might be, the destroying sword of the enemy. *I have hewn them by My prophets,* (Hos. vi. 5) and if that would have served their turn, the other hewing and slaying should not have followed. A wise enemy who is resolved to be avenged, conceals his rage till it be accomplished, and does not threaten before he strikes, but makes the execution of his purpose the first revealing of it. Therefore, we may know that God, who doth all things most wisely intends favour in threatening; denounces indignation that He may be interrupted. Not to inflict it, that is His desire. He would gladly have us stay His hand. A humble penitent acknowledgment will do it. "*Minatur ne cædat, cædit ne occidat;*" says Chrysostom. *He threatens that He may not strike, and strikes that He may not destroy.* If speaking either mildly or sharply, will prevail with His children, He will not stir the rod to them: and when the rod is in His hand, if shewing or shaking it will serve the turn, He will not strike with it. But this is our folly, that usually we abuse all this goodness, and will not part with our sins, till we smart for them, and be beaten from them. We pull punishment out of God's hand; as Solomon says, *The fool's mouth calleth for strokes.* Prov. xviii. 6. When these indulgent ways that the Lord uses, avail nothing, then, as a physician wearied in striving with lenitives and gentle medicines in a fixed, stubborn disease that yields not to them, it is no wonder that he betake himself to sharper remedies, and cut and burn, if need be, that He may cure. The Lord's complaint, in the beginning of the viith chapter of this prophecy, sounds this way, *When I would have healed Ephraim.* If it be thus, then, with the Church of God, that it is often found guilty of great sins, and withal, great insensibleness and impenitence, it is no wonder that it is often found under great and many afflictions. There being in the Church, in such societies as profess God's name, peculiar sins, such as are found no where else, by reason of God's peculiar covenant with them, and ordinances among them; *viz.*, contempt of the ordinances, and breach of the covenant; and by the same reason too, peculiar aggravations of the common sins, and ingredients of such things as make the same sins that other people commit, to be of a deeper dye among God's people; their special relation to Him, and the special means and mercies they receive from Him, by which they are both more instructed and more obliged to obedience; these things make the disobedience more heinous in itself, and more offensive to God. He cannot but take it very ill to be disregarded by his own Και ου

τεκνον.—Thus the Lord makes a great and loud complaint that all may hear, Isa. i. 2; calls heaven and earth to hear it, that He had *nourished and brought up children, and they had rebelled against Him.* What do we deserve for our sins? Do not our oaths and cursing, our pride and deceit, our wonderful ignorance and profaneness, our formality, hypocrisy, and, above all, our deep security, threaten us with some heavy judgment? Which cannot be avoided but by godly sorrow and earnest prayer, by the most humble way of acknowledgment and real amendment. This is our work this day; and unless we set about it for ourselves, and pray for it to the whole kingdom, we know not what we are doing. We cannot do any thing to purpose on behalf of the Church of God, nor be fit supplicants for its deliverance, whilst we remain ungodly ourselves.

II. God's way of afflicting His people: *I will go and return to my place.* The way that He will afflict them, is indeed the heaviest, as conveyed in this expression; as if He should say, I will withdraw myself from them, and will not appear to them at all for a time, yea, a long time. Well may it be rendered by *affliction* in the other clause, for they shall be truly so when the Lord is gone from them. Upon the withdrawing of His gracious presence, as necessarily follows affliction, as mist upon the setting of the sun. This was heavier than all His corrections. So long as they could but hear and see Him amongst them, although it were chiding, yea, *scourging* them, yet, still there was this comfort, that they might speak to Him as being near them, and so, considering His merciful nature, might have hope, by their complaints and cries in His presence, to move Him to compassionate and spare them, and be reconciled. But when He was out of sight and quite gone from them, and so could neither hear nor see them in their misery, this was indeed the chief misery, worse than all that they could suffer in other punishments. In the preceding verses, He threatens to be *as a moth* to them, consuming them, though more slowly and insensibly; which was by lesser judgments that befel these kingdoms, as the history of them shows: then, *as a lion*, devouring more suddenly: but the gradation rises to the highest in this last, though to an ignorant creature it sounds least: *I will return to my place.* I will retire my favourable presence from them, and shut up all the influences and evidences of my grace. Which, in a public national sense, (as here it is to be taken,) imports, not only longer and more grievous troubles than any which before had befallen them, (as indeed they were,) but God's leaving of them in those troubles, and not giving, as before, any sign of His merciful presence. As if God should say, I will give them up to those miseries that are to come upon them, and leave them to themselves and to their cruel enemies, and will take no notice of them, until they know what a grievous thing the want of my presence is, and how hateful their sins are, that have deprived them of it, and so be stirred up to seek my face;—they would not regard me, either in my word or in my works, whether of mercy or of judgment, so long as I stayed with them, was present amongst them:—that so I may teach them to know what is the good of my presence, by the evil of my absence, which is a heavier judgment than all I have yet inflicted on them.

And as it is thus in relation to the public condition of the Church, so is it, in a personal and more spiritual sense, to a child of God. No evil he fears so much, or feels so heavy, as God's absenting and withdrawing Himself in displeasure; nor is there any good that he will admit to be compared with the light of God's countenance. Let others seek any good, let them have any good they can, but, says David, for himself and all the godly, the good we seek is this and no other, *Lord, lift upon us the light of Thy countenance.* Psalm iv. 6. He can hear of any distress with courage and resolution, but this he cannot endure to hear of, but deprecates it, Hide not Thy face from Thy servant. A godly man may, in the most prosperous condition, have much concern if the face of God be hid from him. That is his great affliction, as it is here called. There needs nothing else to damp all his prosperity. *Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled.* Psal. xxx. 7. Even in prosperity, riches and power, and other such poor things, do not answer the desires of a soul acquainted with God: all these are nothing without His favour shining on them: no, nor the graces which are within them, which are far more precious than all outward things. The displeased withdrawing of God's countenance, makes a sad night amid all these; as, when the sun is absent, it is night still, notwithstanding all the stars. Although God lay outward affliction on them, yet, if He enlighten them, though in a dungeon, they can rejoice. Yea, when they are inwardly troubled for sin, and God is rebuking them that way, yet, that is not so bad as when He leaves them and *returns to His place.* This is more grievous than when He chides and rebukes them, which he may do, and yet, *not in hot displeasure*, as David teaches us to distinguish it, Psal. vi. 1. It is a more comfortable condition, that He stay with them, and that He reprove them when they sin, (yea, that is a mercy,) than that He leave them, and speak not to them, nor suffer them to speak to Him. They would then desire rather to find Him present though correcting; for then, by speaking to Him, they may express their repentance and requests to Him for pardon. They would say to God, *Strike me, but hear me*, rather than be struck out from all intercourse with Him, and He hold them as His enemies. And thus God may sometimes deal with His own, and particularly for some notable offence, until they be duly humbled and brought to a lowly acknowledgment, and so, to seek His face again; to see if they will be loth to grieve Him again.

Though we all profess to know God, yet, the greatest part of us are so far from duly esteeming Him, that we do not at all know what the spiritual, gracious presence of God is; how sweet the enjoyment, and how bitter and sad the deprivement. Oh, be desirous to understand and know this highest good, and, above all things, seek to enjoy it. And without doubt, the experience of it will persuade you to prize it and entertain it carefully; never willingly to grieve and drive away so great and so good a guest, who brings true happiness along with Him to those with whom He dwells. There is solid peace, and there only, where He is. And for the Church of God, what other thing can we, yea, what need we desire but this, as the assured help of all her distresses and sorrows, that God would return His gracious presence to her again? Then shall her enemies be turned backward, and she shall

sing and rejoice in the God of her salvation. You see, this is the Church's own prayer, Psal. lxxx. 3; she desires no more than this, *Cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be safe.* That is the only sun which chases away the mist of her griefs and troubles. So then, the ending of these confusions we are lying and labouring under, is wrapped up in this; that the presence of our God be both entreated and obtained. This would make a sweet union of hearts, and make all attempts prosperous, and strike a terror into the Church's enemies. But if their *Rock* forsake them, were they never so surely supported with other advantages, yet shall they sink and fall. If He *go to His place*, and shut up His power and wisdom from their help, and leave them with themselves, this shall suffice to undo them, without any enemy. It was sad news, not only to Moses, but to the whole people, Exod. xxxiii. 3; notwithstanding they were bent to provoke Him to do so, it was very grievous for them to hear, that He had refused them His own guidance and would withdraw himself from them, although it was with the promise of an angel to lead them; for little can any possible supply be made by any creature to make up that loss. It was indeed high time for them to put off their ornaments, and be humbled, when their great Ornament and their great Strength, was gone from them in displeasure. Then they put off their garbs of war, and appeared in the penitential dress of sackcloth and ashes.

III. The end of God's thus afflicting His people. And we have these two things to consider in it, both here clearly expressed: 1st, God's intention in the means; 2dly, The power of these means for effecting it. *I will go till they acknowledge their offences and seek my face*, and, in the time of my absence, which will certainly be the time of their heaviest affliction, *they will seek me early.*

1. This is God's end in scourging His people; it is only to bring them to a sorrow for their offences, and an ingenuous confession of it. And if He withdraw Himself, it is not to leave them for ever and look at them no more. On the contrary, it is, that they may learn whether it is better to enjoy Him, or their sins; and that, finding themselves miserable without Him, they may leave those sins with which He will not dwell, and may come and entreat His return to them; which He is willing, being entreated, to grant them. And this He removes from them, that, on their return to Him, and their earnest and humble seeking of His return to them, they may find Him, and enjoy more of His presence than before, and learn to keep it better. He throws His people into the furnace, and goes away, and leaves them there; yet, it is not to let them lie still there, but He is skilful in this work, and knows the time needful for their refining, and then returns and takes them out. His purpose is, to purge away the dross, but He will not lose the gold. Isa. xxvii. 9. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this will serve to take away his sin.* As that sin was the meriting cause of the affliction, it clears God's justice; the end He aims at, when He declares His graciousness and mercy to His people, being no other than this, to destroy the meriting cause of the affliction, by their trouble; to take away that sin which procured it, and then to give them peace. That is His design. He takes no pleasure in their affliction for itself, more than they themselves do. Indeed, in punishing

His enemies, there is pure justice: their punishments are not for a better end, so far as concerns them, but are appointed to torment them. But to His own people, His purpose is, by afflicting them, only to draw from them their sins, which drive Him away from them. And as we see in this the bounty of God, so it instructs us, for our own practice, in the just way both of preventing trouble to ourselves that it come not, and of removing it if it be come upon us. Is this the thing God seeks in punishing us, a sense and acknowledgment of sin committed? Then, if we give Him his end, He will not at all needlessly make use of the means. If, therefore, we either carefully shun sinful provocations, or, being guilty, speedily return and humble ourselves before Him, He will not enter into displeasure against us; He will be appeased towards us. And on our seeing that which is His intent in punishing, before He begins to punish, He is very well pleased to be thus prevented. So then, if either we follow the advice of the Psalmist, Psal. iv. 4, *Stand in awe and sin not*, or that other which follows, that we *examine our hearts* concerning sin, before the decree of punishment go forth, or be put in execution on our guiltiness, pronouncing ourselves guilty, (as the word is here in the text,) which is indeed acknowledging our offences, this is the way to prevent it; and if it be begun upon us, this is the ready way to remove it, for this is the end of it. When the Lord sees His children grieved for their offences and entreating pardon, He is a tender-hearted father, the very *Father of mercies*. Those confessions and prayers that His children utter, enter His paternal ears, the rod falls out of His hand, and He turns his stripes into embraces, and His frowns into smiling. There may be, indeed, a confused cry from the sense of the smart, without repentance, that moves Him not. As He directs parents in correcting a peevish child, *Thou shalt not spare for his crying*, (Prov. xix. 18,) so He Himself doth not spare nor leave off for that kind of crying. It is confession and submission that He seeks, not the howling and complaining which nature draws from any under sharp affliction. This, the Lord complains of in His people, by the same prophet, Hos. vii. 14: *They did not cry unto me with their hearts: they only howled upon their beds.* A man that is upon the rack for extorting confession, he will cry and roar when he confesses nothing; but it is not that which is sought of him, pain forces him to that; it is confession, and when he begins the least word of that, they presently stay and release him. Thus it was with David, and he tells it us, and distinguishes these two expressly, Psalm xxxii. 3—5. He tells us of his *roaring* under the hand of God, but that did no good: he found no ease but that, so long as he *kept silence* from this confession. But as soon as he began, or did but offer at acknowledgment, one word of confession, yea, the promise of it, brought him the release that a whole day's roaring could not obtain. *I roared all day long*, but Thou helpedst me not; still *Thine hand continued heavy upon me.* But I *acknowledged my sin; I said I would confess my transgression, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*

Now, to the end we might confess aright, there must be a searching of our hearts for our sins, and for some particular one or more which God's afflictions aim at. And, First, if we cannot easily

find it out, consider the nature of the affliction. Secondly, seek the knowledge of it from God, who will readily, when He corrects His children, tell them what fault it is. Thirdly, however, finding so many, be sure to spare none of them, and then ye cannot but fall on the main one which breedeth you trouble.

2. The other thing here concerning the end of affliction is, the efficacy of the means for reaching it. *In their affliction they will seek me early.* It had been early, in a wiser sense, to have sought to Him for a reconcilement before the affliction; but here it expresses a most diligent seeking, according to the original word: for things that men are earnest upon, they will be early stirring to set about. For besides that it is a certain prophecy of what was to come to pass in this people, it hath in it this general truth, with which it agrees; to wit, the moral fitness of great affliction to work this diligent seeking of God, before neglected, and acknowledgment of sin before unfelt; which is expressed in the former clause. Together with seeking His face, there must be the sense and acknowledgment of sin. There is no returning to Him, but from it. In following sin, we depart from God, and by forsaking it, we return to Him. These are inseparable; they are but one motion. It was their sin made Him leave them, and go to His place; and therefore it were in vain to seek Him, retaining it, for that would drive Him further from them.

Now affliction is apt to bring men to this; such, I mean, as have any knowledge of God. Although they be not converted, yet, it works them to a temporary fit of returning and seeking God, such as they are capable of. And those make up the greatest part in the public humblings of a nation, or any multitude of people, having most of them no more heat of devotion and desire of God, than the fit of present affliction works; and therefore, when that ceases, they have done likewise with their repentance and regard of God. Being stirred only by that outward principle, they act no longer that way, than while they are acted by it. Water will be very hot, yea, boil and make a noise, when it is upon the fire; but set it off, and it returns within a while, to its natural coldness. Thus it was often with the same people, See Psalm lxxviii. And there are still daily too many instances of it. Yet the Lord, to shew how much regard He hath to repentance, lets not the very semblance of it go to loss. He is pleased, for the repressing of sin, and the purging of His Church of gross and scandalous profaneness, to make use of public afflictions to work in many even this kind of repentance, and to answer this repentance with the removal of the affliction that wrought it. With God's own children, this method holds in a way peculiar to them. They may, indeed, as well as others, sometimes stand in need of the rod for their bettering, and it may work it, but there is this difference; their grief for sin and seeking after God, do not wholly depend on the lash; they are constant in these things, as having a living principle within them; whence they shew in all estates, that sin is to them the greatest grief, and the favour of God the greatest good. Again, when they are surprised with sin, and possibly fall into a fit of security, and must be awaked by some affliction, and it is sent for that purpose, that renew-

ing which it works in them, is not, as in others, a mere present violent motion only, from the impulse of the affliction, but it is real and inward from the grace which is in them, awaked and only set on work by the correction; and therefore it is more abiding than the other. There is in them a special love to God, working their repentings and returning under the sense of His hand. And it is from God's special love to them, which others share not in, that He stirs them up to renew repentance, and upon their repentance takes off affliction, and shews Himself graciously reconciled to them. To some, likewise, it may be, that God may use some particular cross, as a partial and concurring means to the work of their repentance and conversion to God. But however, there is in that some peculiar love of God, and that effectual working of His word and Spirit to beget grace in them, by which afflictions are sanctioned and made useful to excite and awaken grace where it is.

Now, in all these different ways, affliction is apt for this effect; 1st. Because it sets men in upon themselves, calls in their thoughts, which, in a fair season, more readily dissipate and scatter themselves abroad. As they observe, that much light disqualifies the sight of the mind, as well as that of the body, and that, in the dark, men's thoughts are more united and deep; thus in the darkness of affliction, we feel readily more inwards, and that acquaints us better with ourselves and our sins, and so, tends to the first of these two, the acknowledging of our offences. Besides, the particular respect we speak of, is often betwixt the kind of affliction and our own sins.

2dly. When a man is driven by force from the comforts of the world, which he used to hinge upon, especially by some great affliction which breaks him off from them all, then, if he have any thoughts concerning God, those begin to work with him. He bethinks himself for no other way of help, but thinks, Could I obtain the Lord to befriend me, and shew me His favour, that were enough. He could deliver me out of this distress, and in the mean time support me under it. True, I have provoked Him, and, which is heavier than all my other troubles, I have made Him mine enemy; yet, I know He is very compassionate and gracious, therefore I will go to Him, and confess my offence, and I trust He will pardon me. This is the other thing, the seeking of His face. So affliction hath something in it suitable to the work of both. As we see the lost son by his distress came to himself, and then resolved to return to his father. Indeed, when a man is straitened on all hands by a crowd of troubles, and finds no way out, then he finds his only way is upward. We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards Thee. The Israelites went before to other helpers; they are reproved for it, ver. 13; but when once convinced of that folly, no more of any such way, but, as follows in the next words containing a description of their purposes, *Come, let us return to the Lord our God*, they acknowledge Him as the just inflicter of these calamities: *He hath torn*, and *He hath smitten*. Not a word of Salmanazer or Nebuchadnezzar, but their offended God is their smiter, and so no recourse to other powers for this deliverance, but, *Let us return to Him; He will heal us*. Oh then, let us all be persuaded to repentance. And certainly all they who do truly mind the honour of God,

and the good of His Church, will not be negligent at such a time as this. I trust that God who heareth prayer, will have regard to their prayers and His own glory. Amen.

SERMON XXXII.

Isaiah viii. 17.

And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him.

Besides the personal trials and sorrows that are the lot of the godly in this life, every one of them hath a share in the calamities and troubles of the Church; not only when some part of these troubles reaches them, for so they are personal and private, but, in the remotest and most exempted condition, there is a living sympathy which this cannot divest. And for both their own and Zion's griefs, they have but one support to stay their own souls from fainting under the burden of them, but it is a great one, and strong enough to bear all the weight that can be laid upon it. And it is this the Prophet here resolves on. *I will wait upon the Lord, and I will look for Him.*

Amongst the many sins that the prophets had to contend with in the people, one, and a main one, was, their unbelief, which indeed is the root of all disobedience and perverseness. The very natural motion of the heart possessed with it, being, as the Apostle speaks, *to depart from the living God*, and to turn it aside to dead, helpless helpers, makes it run to and confide in any thing rather than in Him, besides whom there is nothing at all to be confided in. To this folly, the Prophet here opposes God's command and his own resolution contrary to it: ver. 11. *For the Lord spake thus to me*, and this was the echo of His voice, resounding from my heart, *I will wait.* And this he speaks not only for himself, but in the name of all that will adhere to it, and subscribe to his purpose; and he intends it as a leading resolution to the godly both in his own and after-times. And it is here upon record for us, as the truest character of faith, and the only establishment of the mind in the days of trouble.

And this is the most powerful way of teaching, when the messengers of God teach, by their own example, those duties they recommend to others. *The Lord spake thus to me, with a strong hand:* not only with the words of His mouth, but with the strength of His hand, He makes the impression of it deep upon their hearts, that the expression of it may come from that inward impression and persuasion of the truth. And that will indeed bind a man strongly (as the word signifies) to the discharge of that high calling, notwithstanding all his discouragements from within and from without, which are so many, that they who have most sense of the nature of it, would possibly undo themselves, were it not the strong hand of God upon their consciences, that binds them to it.

In the words we have to consider, 1st, The trial of faith. 2dly,

The strength of it. The trial of it is in the hiding of God's face from the house of Jacob. The strength of it, is in that fixed purpose of waiting for Him, even in that time of hiding His face.

Who hideth His face.] To a natural ear, this soundeth not so much as fire, and sword, and pestilence and captivity; but, being rightly understood, it is the heaviest word, and very far weighs down all other expressions of distress whatsoever. It is a very large, comprehensive word. All the good that we enjoy in any kind, is but a beam of the face of God; and therefore, the hiding of His face, is a high expression of a dark, afflicted state. The countenance of God shining on them in His universal providence and goodness, is that which upholds the world and all the creatures in their being: the least of them subsists by Him, and the greatest cannot subsist without Him. So that the schools say truly, "There is in the lowest, *aliquid Dei*, and in the highest, *aliquid nihili*." He shines upon all in that sense, preserving them in being, which otherwise would not continue for a moment; as it is excellently expressed, Psalm civ. 29, and particularly concerning man, Psalm xc. 3; Job xxxiv. 13—15.

But the Church of God, which we have here under the name of *the house of Jacob*, doth after an especial manner depend upon a special aspect of His countenance for her being and well-being. Her outward peace and prosperity, with all the blessings that she enjoys, are fruits of a more than ordinary providence. And there are blessings in their nature not ordinary, but peculiar to the Church, which have more of the face of God in them than all outward splendour of prosperity hath, and therefore are the special love-tokens He bestows upon His spouse, the Church, and by which He testifies His marriage with her. And that is the being of a church, the oracles and ordinances wherein God manifests Himself to His church, makes Himself known there as by His face, which is hid from the rest of the world. And though, in comparison of the vision of glory, the clearest, even extraordinary manifestations of God, are but a glance of His back parts, (as that of Moses, which was singular,) yet, in such a sense as suits our present condition, we are said to *appear before the Lord*, and to *stand in His presence*, and *to see His face*, and *the beauty of it* in His house and ordinances. Psal. xlii. 2; xxvii. 4, *&c.*

It is true, that the outward distresses of the Church and people of God are sometimes expressed by the hiding of His face from them, and so it is a part of what he means here; but it is not all the sense of it any where, but it is a word of their affliction, carrying a reflection upon their sin that provoked the Lord to afflict them, and so, implies His just anger kindled by these provocations. And it hath usually the ingredients of spiritual judgments under it, either the depriving them of God's ordinances in their use, or of the power and efficacy of them, (as was at this time, we see, the Prophet's complaint,) and possibly, a great measure of that heavy judgment upon the people, of blindness of mind and hardness of heart, a stupid senselessness under their calamities, which is one of the most certain and the saddest signs of their continuance. And this is the Prophet's meaning in this place. For without these, or something like them, a church may be in real affliction, and yet, not under the eclipse of God's face for all that. Yea,

possibly it may shine clearer on the Church in a time of outward trouble, than in the midst of peaceable and prosperous days: as the moon, when it is dark towards the earth, then the half that is towards heaven is all luminous, and, on the contrary, when it is the full to our view, it is dark heavenward. We see it in the common instance of the primitive times, how the gold shined in the furnace, how holiness and purity of religion flourished and spread in the midst of persecutions, and zeal for God burnt brighter than the fires that were kindled against it, and triumphed over them; and soon after they were put out, how it began to cool and abate, and the purity of religion insensibly died into numbers of superstitious and gaudy devices; and the Church grew downwards, outwardly more pompous, but lost as much for that of integrity of doctrine and worship. And therefore, in the twelfth chapter of Revelations, there is a woman *clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet*, as full of heavenly ornaments as she is destitute of, and withal despises, those of the earth. And look, again, to the eighteenth chapter, and see a woman clothed in purple, and decked with gold and precious stones, and a golden cup in her hand, but herself, under all these dressings, *a harlot*, and her golden cup full of abominable filthiness. So, then, doubtless, the hiding of God's face from His Church, is something beyond her outward lowness and affliction, and greater and heavier than that; the withdrawing of His presence, and His not appearing for their deliverance out of trouble, and their spiritual comfort and benefit under it.

1st. Now, as that is put for the top of all distresses, we should esteem it so. But in reference to ourselves, and to the Church of God, I am afraid a great part of us do not know what it is to have this light. If we did, there needed no more urging it: itself would persuade us enough to prize it, and to fear the loss of it. The soul that knows the sweetness of His presence and His face shining on it, will account no place nor condition hard, providing it may be refreshed with that: as the saints have been in caves and dungeons enjoying more of that light in those times, when other comforts have been abridged. Then they have had a beam from Heaven into their souls in their darkest dungeon, far more worth than the light of the sun and all the advantages the world can afford. That Rabbin who lived twelve years in a dungeon in Francis's time, called a book he wrote, *The Polar Splendour;* implying that he had then seen most intellectual light when he had seen least sensible light. And thus it is with many Christians, in the darkness of distress; if they seek after this light, they may blame themselves and their own neglect if they find not somewhat of this truth. On the other hand, to a spiritual mind, this hiding of God's face will damp and distress the pleasantest outward condition which can be allotted him. It was in the midst of David's prosperity, enough to unseason all: *Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled.* Psal. xxx. 7.

Now, if we would have the Lord, to whom believing souls are married in truth and righteousness, to look pleasantly on us, our great ambition should be, to walk in all well pleasing unto Him, and to seek of Himself those ornaments and that spiritual beauty which may make us lovely in His eyes; as a faithful wife decketh herself only for

her husband. For all these inferior things are but figures of that mysterious life of grace which the soul hath from God, and by which it lives in Him. There are some singular largesses and outlets of spiritual joy which God gives not to every Christian, nor to any at all times. These we speak not of. But if we would enjoy more abiding influences of His love, and find Him accepting of our services at our hands, and measuring His graces to us, coming to us, and giving us access to come to Him, putting a life and blessing into His ordinances, though with different degrees at divers times; then our care should be, to entertain this friendship and correspondence diligently, to watch over our hearts and ways, that we admit of nothing that may disturb or interrupt it, and to be jealous of the least abatement; to search and find out the cause of it without delay. And if we do thus, we shall undoubtedly find the Lord willing to converse and dwell with us; and though He give us lower measures of comfort and graces than others get, they shall be so much as will enable us to go on in our journey. Above all, study humility. The High Lord loves to give Himself and His society most to the lowly heart. Trust not at all to thyself, nor to any thing below Him. Lay all thy confidence upon His power and goodness. Ye see here, that it was the multitude of sins that eclipsed His face from His own people, *the house of Jacob;* as He tells them by this Prophet, chap. lix. 1. It was particularly their distrust of God, and running to other helps beside Him. Ever, the more he is in thy esteem, the more thou shalt have of Him; and the more thou believest His all-sufficiency, the more thou shalt find it and know it in thine own experience. Yea, it may be that when His face is hid from the Church, in respect of public distress and desertion, yet, it may even then shine bright upon a soul that secretly cleaveth to Him and delights in Him. So here, the Prophet says not that He hides His face from *me*, but, *from the House of Jacob*.

2dly. As for the Church, learn by the Prophet and other penmen of the Holy Scriptures, to eye and consider the estate of God's Church; to take notice how He deals with it when He shines on it and when He hides His face, and be deeply affected with it. Let thine eye be looking out, and let thine *eye affect thine heart*, as it is, Lament. iii. 51. Far be it from thee, to judge it any impertinence, and think it concerns thee not. Truly most of us have both eyes, and if we had twenty more, we should have them all, poring upon our private condition. Providing we might have ease and good days, we should feel little for the *afflictions of Joseph*. It were not excusable, if even our secret devotions took us up so as to forget the Church; how much less excusable, to have our hearts ingrossed wholly by our earthly concerns! And we see here what it is we have to do on the Church's behalf; to bewail her sins, begging pardon for those evils for which God hath hid His face from her; and what to desire, only to commence her own suit anew, as troubles arise, *Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*;—as the returning of the spring makes all things to flourish, and again puts a new visage upon nature. Mark the harmony and resound of the Lord's returning to Israel; the returning of their hopes and the sweet effects of it, Hos. xiv. 1, 5. All those heavy indignations that are on, or might trouble, the Church

and themselves, arise from security, impenitence, and the fruitlessness of the word amongst them, which makes the Lord hide His face from them. Our part is, therefore, to return to Him. Oh, had we hearts to put the Lord to it, He could and would do yet greater things for us. And this we ought earnestly to desire, and with all patience to wait for it; which is the Prophet's way, *I will wait.*

The two wheels of the soul are, desire and hope. Difficulty sets an edge upon desire; and the appearance of obtaining upholds hope. And both these are in the words the prophet here uses for his waiting and expecting; for they import an earnest desire, and yet a patient attending upon the issue. Look to that of David, Psal. cxxx. 6: *I wait for Thee, more than they that wait for the morning,*—that watch until the morning, as some render it; in the cold night that watch.—The thing the pilot waits for, is not a private good to himself, for that could not stand a counterbalance to the evil he is sensible of. The Lord's hiding His face from the house of Jacob, was that which troubled him, and his waiting was answerable, for the return of that light to the house of Jacob. Grieved that the Lord should absent Himself from His people, he looks back upon God's frequent appearings and shewing of His face to Jacob, by such visions as gave lustre and glory to the place. See Hosea xii. 9. *We found Him in Bethel, there He spake with us,*—even us who have interest in these gracious appearances. And there it is urged for a ground of hope and waiting and calling on God. Now, for the face of God to be hid from those who were the posterity of Jacob and God's own peculiar people, was a sad thought to the prophet, who stays himself with this, that the Lord God had made known to him His purpose of returning and restoring the house of Jacob, and upon this he resolves to believe, and to rely upon God's word for it: *I will wait.*

Hoping, waiting, and believing, are taken indifferently in the Scriptures, and all the difference is only in relation to time. Faith believes the present word, and hope looks out for the after-accomplishment; and the patient waiting for it, results from both. So they are but the actings of the same faith in a different notion, and they are indeed the test of faith. Our hearts are naturally of another temper than to take the Lord's word and repose upon it, and, when it is deferred, yea, and cross appearances come in betwixt, yet, still firmly to believe and patiently to wait for the accomplishment. We are of a childish humour. That which we laugh at in children, in little things, such as their minds are set on, we may be sorry for in ourselves as a greater folly, being in greater affairs. We are all in haste, and would have things come as fast as our fancying; and upon the delay of these mercies we look for, are almost ready to give over. That which brake forth from that wicked king's mouth, the seed of it is in all our hearts, when things appear worse and worse: *This evil is from the Lord; why should I wait for him any longer?* 2 Kings vi. 23. It is strange, in court suits and other business of a like nature, how long a man will wait upon another, and think all is well if he speed at last; and yet, how briskly we deal with God if He answers not at the first!

But faith teaches us (so to speak) spiritual civility, good manners towards God; it lets the soul see His greatness, and goodness, and

truth, and persuades us to wait on Him, and not to weary in waiting; *to wait patiently*, as it is Psal. xl. 1. Faith composes the mind, cures that light, fickle hastiness which is naturally in us. *He that believeth shall not make haste*, says the same Prophet, Isa. xxviii. 16. And is it not good reason that we wait for Him? Is He not wise enough to choose the fittest times for His own purposes? Well may we wait till He be gracious to us, for He *waits to be gracious* to us. Isa. xxx. 18. He is not slack, but is staying only for the due season; His love is waiting for the time that His wisdom hath appointed. And, to express His affection in our terms, He is longing for that time, as well as we are. For the same word is there used for *His* waiting, that both here and in that verse is used for *ours*, and it signifies an earnest waiting or breathing for that thing we wait for; and, therefore, since He waits and longs, our waiting is in a happy conformity to Him. And thus, with good reason it is concluded, *They are blessed* that *wait for Him.* Thus there is a word very answerable, Hab. ii. 3: *The vision is for an appointed time,*—we read, *At the end it shall speak*, but it may be rendered,—*It breatheth towards the end;* runs, as it were, so fast that it panteth. The same word is used, Cant. ii., for the rising of the morning.

By fretting impatience, there is nothing gained but needless desire. It advances not our business, but perplexes us to no purpose. And, on the other hand, patient waiting loses not a moment, but attains its end in the very due time determined; and hath this advantage in the mean time, that it puts the mind into a temper of peace and contentedness, which a man may act and profess to others, but cannot truly have within himself without faith. Isa. xxvi. 3: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.* This waiting is always answered; never marked with disappointment, as is the ordinary custom of other hopes. Therefore, that which the Prophet hath, *He that believeth shall not make haste*, the Apostle Peter renders, *shall not be ashamed*, 1 Pet. ii. 6. Though he hasten not, but wait, and wait long, yet, his waiting shall not shame him; none shall have matter to laugh at him for it, for his waiting shall be repaid with success, his hope shall be accomplished. Whereas, any other expectations make men ridiculous, and expose them to scorn, in that they look often for most contentment in those things that deceive them. The brooks that grow dry in summer, are an emblem of worldly hopes. Thus, Job vi. 19: *The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed.* But this waiting on the Lord, never yet deluded any. *I waited patiently for the Lord*, says the Psalmist, *and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.* Psal. xl. 1. Then he makes his experience a common good; draws it to a general conclusion, v. 4: *Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust.* Thus he confirms that general truth by his particular experience, and, as the Apostle says of them who believe, *sets to his seal that God is true.* Thus ought every one, upon his experience of the Lord's goodness in his deliverance, speak to the advantage of the Lord's faithfulness, and say, As He is called *abundant in goodness and truth*, so I have found Him, and I would have

others to rely upon Him: if my testimony could do any good to that, or persuade them, they shall be sure to have it wheresoever I come. Thus Psalm xxxiv., the Prophet will not smother the Lord's goodness which he hath found: *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.* And verse 8, he invites all to *taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed are they who trust in Him.* He will advise others to this upon his own experience. Surely, he will know where to seek, when he is again put to it. As he loves the Lord for what he hath found, so he will make use of Him always in all his straits. Psalm cxvi. 1: *I love the Lord;* and seeing *He hath inclined His ear to me,* I am resolved upon this course, *I will call upon Him as long as I live.*

The difficulties which the Prophet's faith here encounters, and which commended the strength of it, are these two: 1*st*, The multitude of unbelievers round about, as a mighty torrent which he was to come against; that so few would rely on the Lord. But he resolves against it, as Joshua did for obedience, *Choose you whom you will serve,* so here, for faith; Let others take their course, each one run his own way, my choice is this, *I will wait on the Lord.* And this is no small matter, to maintain the preciousness of faith against the profaneness and atheism of the world. And considering the disregard of God that there is in the society and converse of the greatest part, it is much if a godly mind do not sometimes suffer something by it; and we have need to beware of it.

2*dly*. The other difficulty is in the thing itself, which looks so dark and unlikely, that many of His people are giving over trusting on Him, and He seems to give over helping them. *He hides His face, yet I will wait on Him alone,* says the Prophet. Though all other hearts fail, yet I will wait on Thee. Though Thou withdraw Thyself, and hide Thy face, yet I will look to no other, I will stay by Thee, and wait on Thee. And although not only my days may pass, but ages, before the things be accomplished I look for, yet I will believe they shall come to pass. I will look on them in this notion, though I cannot live to see them. And, indeed, besides that the great temporal deliverances which the Prophet foresaw and here looks into, came long after his days, it is likely that he looks beyond these too, to the coming of the Messiah, of whom he speaks so clearly both in this chapter and the former, and also in the following. Notwithstanding all the sins of this people, and all the heavy judgments their sins call for and have brought, or shall bring on them, yet he believed the Lord would send them that great Deliverer and Saviour, His only Son, whom He had promised. Thus the eye of faith looks over the head of many difficulties and of many ages betwixt it, to the thing it expects, and sees it beyond them all (so the word here, *I will look for Him*, is to stand upright as a line and look out, answering to that word, Ἀποκαραδόκια, Rom. viii.); desiring and confidently expecting good from Him to His Church. In these kingdoms, though the outward face of affairs look quite contrary, and the Lord for a time suffer our troubles to increase, and hide His face as not regarding us, suffering things, by the perverseness of men on all hands, to turn to a universal confusion and disorder, yet still, you that know the Lord and His dealing, pray, and

believe, and wait, and be assured your prayer shall be answered in due time.

Thus for your personal condition. You that desire the light of God's countenance above all things, though He seem to deny and hide His face from you for a time, yet wait on Him, leave Him not, for if ye do, you are sure to perish; but if ye wait on Him, ye may say, It may be He will be gracious, but if He will not, I know no other to go to; I will still wait and try Him. What think ye of Job's purpose? *Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him:* though I saw Him ready to throw me into hell, yet I will look for mercy. Faith cannot be nonplussed. There is in it a pious obstinacy that will not yield to the greatest opposition, nor give over so long as there is any possibility of prevailing. *I said,* says Jonah, *I am cast out from Thy presence,* yet for all that, I cannot give the matter up for desperate; I must have leave to *look* towards thee: *Yet, I will look towards Thy holy Temple.* Jon. ii. 4. Invincible faith, as here, *I will wait—I will look.* His doubling the word is meant to express his resolvedness, in the beginning of the verse, and in the end of it. And so, faith conquers the difficulty that makes against it. And this is the purest acting of faith, when there is nothing of sense to support it, and yet it holds out, and, as Abraham did, against hope believes in hope. When the soul is at the hardest pinch, faith will say, I will lie at the footstool of the Throne of grace until I be thrown from it. I will not away from it. I will wait on till the last moment.

A SERMON

PREACHED TO THE CLERGY.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.

It *is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that to come to judgment*, saith the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Two sad necessities to sinful man. This last, nature's light discovers not; but the other, though it be seldom deep in our thoughts, is almost always before our eyes; and though few seriously remember it, yet none can be ignorant of it. Against this known and universal evil, the chief of heathen moralists, the stoics, have much endeavoured to arm themselves. And others have bent the strength of their wits to master the fear of death, and have made themselves, and some of their hearers, conquerors in imagination: but when the king of terrors really appeared, he dashed their stout resolutions, and turned all their big words and looks into appalment.

And the truth is, there are no reasonings in the world able to argue a man into a willingness to part with a present being, without some hopes, at least, of one more happy; nor will any contentedly dislodge, though they dwell never so meanly, except upon terms of changing for the better.

The Christian, then, (not the nominal Christian, but he who is truly such,) is the only man that can look death immediately in the face; for he knows assuredly that he shall remove to *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

The discourse beginning this chapter, occasioned by the end of the former, continues to the 12th verse, where the Apostle subjoins an apology for his high and confident manner of speaking; which apology serves likewise for a very pertinent re-entry to the main discourse of the former chapter, concerning the worth and work of the ministry. But because of the Apostle's frequent, yet seasonable digressions, proleptic and exegetic, divers may model the analysis after divers manners.

To take, then, the discourse as it lies here together, abstract from precedent and consequent, I think, (with submission,) it may be divided into these two heads: First, The Apostle's resolution for death. Secondly, His course and manner of life. Each is supported with its proper grounds or reasons: the former to verse 9, the other to the end of the chapter.

The resolution is so strong, that he expresses it by the words of earnest desiring and groaning. And this resolution for death, springs from his assurance of life after death: *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* He speaks in his own and his colleague's names. And the whole matter of both is set forth by an

elegant continued metaphor. Both the desire and the assurance causing it, are illustrated, First, by their chief cause, verse 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God; who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* Both in his gracious purpose for this, hath He made us, and in a pledge of performance He hath given us earnest, even His Spirit. Then they are illustrated by their subordinate cause, faith, verse 7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

His course and purpose,—for he both signifieth what he doth, and how he intends to continue to do,—His course and purpose of life is, in general, to walk acceptably in this absence from the Lord, (ver. 9). And in particular, walking diligently and faithfully in the ministry. Ver. 11, 18.

One reason of this course and purpose, is implied in that illative, [Διὸ] which knits this part with the former. And indeed, a good frame of life hath a most necessary connexion with a strong resolution for death, and assurance of life eternal; and they mutually cause one another. That a pious life gives strength against death, and hope of eternal life, none will deny; nor is it less true, that the assurance animates and stirs up to obedience: so far is it from causing sloth, that it is the only spur to acceptable walking. *We are confident*, saith he, (ver. 8,) WHEREFORE, *we labour to be accepted*, ver. 9.

This purpose is further backed with a double reason, viz., of two pious affections; the one of fear, ver. 11, the other of love, ver. 14: that of fear, arising from the consideration of the judgment-seat of Christ; that of love, from the thoughts of his death. Ver. 14. *For that love of God constrained us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.* These are the reasons that stir up this eminent Apostle to a study of acceptable walking in all things, particularly in his especial calling, the ministry of his reconciliation:—approving himself therein to his God, and as much as may be to the consciences of the people; saying and doing all things with intention of His glory, and their good; free from vain glory; not speaking for himself, nor living to himself, but to Him who died for him, and rose again; not possessed with carnal respects touching himself or others; no, nor entertaining carnal considerations of Christ himself, as being ascended, and therefore to be considered and conversed with after a new manner (spiritually) by all those that are new creatures in him, and reconciled to God by him, through the ministry of the word of reconciliation. Which reconciliation God himself hath thus effected; (ver. 21,) *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Who knew no sin practically, knew none; was altogether free from sin, not only from commission and consent, but from the very first and least motions of sin. And indeed no one was thus fit to be *made sin*, but one who knew none, an immaculate Lamb. *Made him to be sin*, not by constraint, not beside his knowledge and consent. The heathens observed, that their sacrifices were successless and unhappy, when the beasts came unwillingly to the altar. We need not fear this point: our blessed Sacrifice, who was also Priest and Altar, offered himself up

cheerfully: *Then saith he, Lo, I come to do Thy will,* Heb. x. 7. *And I lay down my life for the sheep,* saith the good Shepherd, John x. 15. *To be sin;* not only to take the similitude of sinful flesh, but becoming man for man's sake, and to be *numbered with transgressors,* as the prophet speaks, Isa. liii. 12, and *to bear the sin of many,* but the imputed guilt and inflicted punishment of sin. And these sins of many made him imputatively an exceedingly great sinner, and therefore he is said to have been *made sin,* by reason of this imputation; whereupon followed his suffering as a sacrifice. And I conceive, that the reason why the word which in the first language signifies sin, is sometimes taken for the sacrifice, is because the confessed sins were, in a manner, transferred and laid upon the heads of the legal sacrifices. And so saith the prophet, *He hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Isa. liii. 6.

He was then *made sin* primarily, by imputation of, and consequently, by suffering for, our sins, as our expiatory sacrifice. *He made him sin for us,* in our stead, and for our good; to wit, our redemption; as follows. *That we might be made,* or *become* [γενώμεθα,] *the righteousness of God in him;*—but be it *made* [λινώμεθα], it is no otherwise than Christ was made sin imputatively; and if this inference need help, each word that follows will confirm it. *Righteousness,* not righteous; to shew the perfection of it, not to urge its unity. *Righteousness,* not righteousnesses; as intimating that it is but one righteousness, whereby we are all justified of God. Not our own, but *in him,* not in ourselves. All which makes it clear, as it were written with the sunbeams, that, by the most gracious exchange, as he took our sins, so he hath given us his righteousness. It is true, this is always accompanied with holiness inherent, but imperfect. By that imputed righteousness, the Spouse of Christ is *clear as the sun,* all luminous; but, in regard of infused righteousness, she is only *fair as the moon,* but the one half light and that appearing unequally too, waxing and waning, and having spots at its fulness here below. She is holy in this regard, but righteousness in the other righteousness of God; His by appointing, His by gift and application, and His by acceptance. *Of God in him;* that is, its being *in him* who is called *the Lord our righteousness; in him* in whom the Father acquiesceth, and is well pleased. *Blessed are they that trust in him.*

But to the former, ver. 20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.*

Here we have all the parties requisite in the treaty of reconciliation. God, though offended, seeking peace with men, His creatures, and by sin become rebels: *As though God beseeched you.* Christ the only procurer, and likewise the chief ambassador, of this peace. And then, lastly, have we the sub-delegated messengers of this peace: *We, as ambassadors for Christ. We,* the Apostles, and all the ministers of the Gospel. For as in their peculiarities, they had no successors, for that is repugnant, so, in those things wherein they have successors, all true ministers of the word are such. The Apostle himself calls this embassy, *the ministry of reconciliation,* ver. 18.

Ambassadors for Christ, that is, in his stead. In this verse, we

have the office of the ministry, under the name of ambassadors; and their message, the delivery whereof is the execution of their office, the entreaty of men, to be reconciled to God. Both the office and the message are backed with due authority or warrant. The office's warrant is, that we are ambassadors for Christ, or in his stead; that is, subordinate to him by his own ordination: the warrant of the message is God's own will who sent them, for it is His mind to beseech you by us.

But to resume the first division, whereof each of its two parts will afford its proposition; and upon these two propositions I shall insist, in what remains to be said.

The first proposition is this: *from their office, ministers of the Gospel are true ambassadors, under Christ, from God to man.* As soon as man had divested himself of God's image, his shameful nakedness made him run into the thickets; nor could he ever since then look his Maker directly in the face, nor endure to hear His immediate voice. Therefore, when God himself would come and dwell among men, He vailed His deity with human flesh: there He stood behind the wall, and shewed Himself through the lattices. *Let us not hear again the voice, nor let us see this great fire any more, that we die not,* said the people at Horeb; and the Lord who knew their mould, saith, *They have said well.* Deut. v. 28. *I will raise them up a prophet,* said God, *from among their brethren; like unto thee!* and He did so. As He came for man's good, so, for the same end, went He away again: *It is expedient for you,* saith he, *that I go away.* John xvi. 7. And since that time he hath continued to send men, men yet liker themselves than He was, men subject to like infirmities, sin not excepted. *Even as my Father sent me, so send I you,* saith He. John xx. 21. But the loss in this change were intolerable, did He not allay it somewhat by sending His Spirit upon those men whom he sends to men: *If I depart I will send him unto you,* saith he, John xvi. 7. He is gone indeed, as was necessary, but, being ascended, he caused gifts to descend upon men: *Some he gave to be apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and pastors, and some teachers;* all *for the work of the ministry,* and that *for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of his body,* Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Thus, then, God treats with man in a human way. He draws not His own to Him by immediate revelations, nor rejects He the rest by express words from heaven; but, while He sends His ambassadors indifferently to both, He works differently in them. And the admirable variety of effects of the same message, after the same manner, and at the same time delivered, do not a little set forth and commend that same [πολυποίκιλος σοφια του Θεου,] *manifold wisdom of God* (Eph. iii. 10); that his word should sweetly melt the hearts of some, and, as it were, more violently break the hearts of others; that it should harden and blind some, mollify and enlighten others; that it should convince those whom yet it converts not, and that by its majesty, though in the mouths of simple men, it should bridle and restrain many of all ranks, whom it renews not; moulding and framing them to an external conformity and square carriage, whereby the world, and the church of God in it especially, are much advantaged,

And the lustre of all these effects, is exceedingly set off by the quality of the messengers, being to the world's eye but contemptible men. But had it not been more congruous to the grandeur of this great King, to have sent angels, His ministering spirits, to be the ministers of the word? Had He not better have used those precious vessels for His chief treasure, than to have concredited it to vessels of earth, not to say, to discredit it by so doing? No, His thoughts are not as ours: yea, they are furthest above ours when they seem to be furthest below them. And if we look again, we shall find it more glorious to have conquered so many kingdoms, and brought them to our King, the Lord Jesus, by the preaching of a few fishermen, and such like, than if He had done it by those active spirits. The meanness of the means, raises exceedingly the glory of the Sovereign's cause.

Thus we see how the sending of men in this embassy, was requisite for the frailty of man, and how well it suits with the glory of God.

Hence may be deduced some necessary things for all in general, something in particular for these ambassadors, and something for those to whom they are sent.

First, it may persuade all to entertain more respectful thoughts of this function than most men do. Some speak out their disrespect; others, though not expressing it in words, have it lurking in their breasts, and appearing in their practices. To instance in one error or two, which many labour under, springing evidently from a low esteem of this calling.

1. Are there not divers pretenders to it, who being, and possibly finding themselves, insufficient for all other employments, have their recourse to this, making no doubt of their sufficiency for it? Yea, such there are, too many; their worldly friends being guilty either of begetting in them, or of fomenting this presumption. On the other side, be there not others, who, having some advantage of outward rank, or inward endowments, would think themselves, and be thought by those who have interest in them, to be exceedingly disparaged if this calling were mentioned to them, and who would count it a great abasing, yea, a losing of themselves to embrace it? Against these two gross mistakes, may very appositely be opposed this, *We are ambassadors for Christ.* From which expression it is most evident, that the ministry both requires the best and ablest, and deserves them; that the refuse and abjects of men cannot be worthy of it, nor it unworthy of the choicest. It requires able men, because they are to be *ambassadors;* and this will follow of itself. Again, consider, *whose* ambassadors, and in what business. The ambassadors of the King of kings, in the weighty matter of treating peace betwixt Him and mankind. Shall it be said of his ambassadors, as Cato said to those who were sent by the Romans to Bythinia counting that three wants were amongst them, *viz.*, that they had neither feet, nor head, nor heart?

It is true God may, and sometimes, especially in extraordinary times, does make use of unlettered and low-qualified men; but then He inlays their defects by a singular supply: therefore, that is no rule for us in the ordinary vocation. It is a piece of God's prerogative, to use unlikely means without disadvantage. Any thing is a fit instrument in his hands; but we are to choose the fittest and best means, both in our

own affairs, and in His service; and if in any, this eminent service of embassy, requires a special choice. If bodily integrity was requisite in the servers at the altar under the Law, shall we think that the mentally blind and lame are good enough for the ministration under the Gospel, which exceeds in worth and glory? *Who is sufficient for these things?* saith the great doctor of the Gentiles. Our practices seem to answer, Any body: And it is observable, that carelessness in this kind, is usually the companion of false worship, and too much care of decking, trimming, and making gay the externals of it. It is said of Jeroboam, that *he made high places*, but *priests of the lowest of the people*, 1 Kings xii. 31. As it was said, that the church had. As he said of "golden cups and wooden priests," so we may say of that church which values them so much, They are well looked to, neatly adorned, but their priests grossly ignorant.

This function requires able men, being a weighty charge, and is *worthy* of them, being highly honourable. And doubtless, there is egregious profaneness in the contrary thoughts. The heathen can style those stones more happy than common ones, which are chosen for the building of temples, and amongst these, the altar-stones the happiest. And shall we not account truly happy, those living stones, which are hewn out for God's building, and chiefly, (so to speak) the altar-stones, the messengers of peace? What can be more honourable than to serve the highest Lord in the chiefest functions of His house? How ought we to account of an ambassador's place, when King David esteemed so highly a door-keeper's office in this King's court!

2. *We are ambassadors.* This may correct another error in the world, though accounted by those that entertain it, a choice piece of policy for God. It is this: the ministry being so mean a thing in the world's eye, and so obnoxious to contempt, it is expedient that it be raised and brought into credit by annexed excessive dignities, high titles of honour, and suitable revenues. It is true, that penury and want of competency in temporals, in those who bring an eternal treasure, argues base ingratitude, and is most unworthy of well-constituted churches. But where the remedy exceeds too far, it becomes worse than the disease, being compounded of carnal prudence and ambition, both of which are *enmity to God.* And this I take to have been one of Germany's provoking sins, and Rome's predominant sin. For these incongruous honours, to speak it in a word, raising some from contempt, teach them to contemn and insult over their brethren; to say nothing of their affronting of higher quality, yea, of princes and kings themselves, while they pretend to be the only supporters of their crowns. And if this their insolency in advancement, devolve them back again in contempt, and their honour become their shame, they may thank themselves. Their Master taught them another method of attaining due esteem. He hath given honour enough to those whom he hath made his ambassadors; and if men contemn this, he takes the indignity as done to himself, and he is able enough to vindicate his own honour. *Let men esteem of us, as the ministers of Christ,* 1 Cor. iv. 1. Here is all the esteem St. Paul requires; and they are unworthy of this who are not content with it. Their best way, whom God employs, is to study His glory, and He will not fail to honour those that honour him.

And this leads me fitly on from the conviction of these common errors, to a word of particular exhortation to those ambassadors, from the nature of their calling so expressed. And it binds upon them chiefly these four duties: 1. Piety. 2. Prudence. 3. Fidelity. 4. Magnanimity.

Piety, in two steps or degrees: first, to look they be friends with God; secondly, to labour to be inward with Him.

[1.] They are to look that they be friends with God. For it no way suits that they be ambassadors for reconciliation, who are not themselves reconciled: it is certain, such will move both coldly and successlessly in the work. What He can do extraordinarily who doth always what He wills in heaven and earth, we question not. He can convey grace by those to whom He gives none. He can cause them to carry this treasure, and have no share in it; carry the letter and not know what is in it; and make them, so to speak, equivocal causes of conversion.

But, usually, He *converts* those whom He makes the happy *strengtheners of their brethren*, Luke xxii. 32. We think, that they who savingly know not Christ, should not be fit to make other men acquainted with him. He who can tell men what God hath done for his soul, is the likeliest to bring their souls to God. Hardly can he speak to the heart, who speaks not from it. *Si vis me flere*, &c. Before the cock crows to others, he claps his wings, and rouses up himself. How can a frozen-hearted creature warm his hearers' hearts, and enkindle them with the love of God? But he whom the love of Christ constrains, his lively recommendations of Christ, and speeches of love, shall sweetly constrain others to love him. Above all loves, it is most true of this, that none can speak sensibly of it, but they that have felt it. Our most requisite pulpit-orators, yea, speak they with the tongues of men and angels, without the experience of this love, are no fit ambassadors for Christ, for his embassy is a love-treaty. Such men are but sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals. The sublimest and best contrived of their discourses, glow-worm like, or as those foolish fires, may have some light with them, heat they have none. When a man speaks of reconciliation and happiness, as if he had some interest therein himself, when his words are animated with affection, as he is like to beget some affection where there is none, so, a pious hearer that is already gained to Christ, finds the embassy drawing him effectually nearer Heaven: blowing that Divine fire that is within him, and causing it to mount upwards. *As in water, face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man*, saith the wise man, Prov. xxvii. 19. There is a certain peculiar sympathy and sweet correspondence betwixt souls that lodge the same spirit. Those that are united to the same Head, Christ, by reconciliation, find their hearts agreed, and they relish the discourses one of another. Thus important is it every way, both for the begetting and for the strengthening of grace, that the ambassador thereof be a reconciled person.

[2.] As he must look that he be friends with God, so, secondly, he must labour also to be inward with God. For though the embassy be the same, in great part, in the mouths of all God's ambassadors, yet, there is a world of mysterious particulars contained in it, and they meet with many intricate pieces in their particular treaties with men's con-

sciences. And in these, know they the will of the King, their master, more or less clearly, according as they are more or less intimate with Him. How knew divine Moses so much of the Lord's will, but by much converse with Him?

These ambassadors, to the end that they may do so, must labour for integrity. His *secret* is with the righteous. For humility. He is familiar indeed with the lowly; He takes up house with them: *With such a one will I dwell, saith the Lord.* God's choice acquaintance are humble men. For the spirit of meekness. He whom we named was eminent in this, and so, in familiarity with God. Christ singularly loves the meek and lowly, they are so like himself. One thing they must mainly take heed of, if they aspire to a holy familiarity with God; earthly-mindedness. If no servant of the god of mammon can serve this God in point of common service, how much less can he be fit for an eminent employment, as an embassy, and enjoy the intimacy requisite for that employment? These messengers should come near the life of angels, *always beholding the face of the Father of lights.* But if their affections be engaged to the world, their faces will still be that way. Fly high they may, sometimes, in some speculations of their own; but, like the eagle, for all their soaring, their eye will still be upon some prey, some carrion here below. Upright, meek, humble, and heavenly minds, then, must the ambassadors of this great King have, and so obtain His intimacy, mounting upon those wings of prayer and meditation, and having the eye of faith upwards. Thus shall they learn more of His choice mysteries in one hour, than by many days poring upon casuists and schoolmen, and such like. This ought to be done, I confess; but above all, the other must not be omitted. Their chief study should be, that of their commission, the holy scriptures. The way to speak skilfully from God, is often to hear Him speak. *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,* saith the evangelic prophet, (chiefly intending Christ,) *to speak a word in season to the weary.* Ay, that is the learnedest tongue when all is done. But how?—*He wakeneth me morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.* Isa. l. 4.

Thus we see how these ambassadors have need to be friends, and intimate friends with their Lord. For if they be much with God in the mount, their returns to men will be with brightness in their faces, and the law in their hand; their lives and their doctrines shall be heavenly.

2. The second requisite of these ambassadors is, *Prudence*, or dexterity to manage their Master's business. Wise princes and states, in choosing their ambassadors, above all other kinds of learning, have respect to practical abilities; and they that can best read the several geniuses and dispositions of several nations and particular men, and accordingly know how to treat with every one according to their temper, to speak to them in their own language, are judged the fittest men for that employment. Great is the diversity of humours among men: some are timorous, some rash, some avaricious, some ambitious, some slow and leaden, others precipitant and mercurial, and many other varieties. Now, to know how to deal with each of these in their own kind, for the advancement of his master's business, is a special discre-

tion in an ambassador. And those ambassadors we speak of, had as much need of it as any: they have men of all, both outward and inward differences, to deal with, and the same men so different from themselves at divers times, that they are hardly the same; some ignorant, others learned, some weak, others strong, some secure with false presumptions, others tormented with false fears. And much prudent consideration of those differences, and accommodating themselves thereunto in the matter and manner of their discourses, is very expedient in their treaties. *Of some have compassion, plucking them out of the fire, making a difference.* Jude xxii. What other is St. Paul's *becoming all things to all men, that he might win some?* 1 Cor. ix. 22. And this policy is far different from temporising, and compliance with evil, which in no case can be tolerated in these ambassadors, for that is disadvantageous to their business: it may be the way of their own promotion, but it is not the way to advance their Master's kingdom, which end should be the square of all their contrivances, and with it nothing will suit but what is upright. A kind of guile they may use, but it must carry their King's impress; it must be a holy guile; and such, the ministers of the Gospel not only may, but ought to study. Fishers of men they are, and why may they not use certain baits, and diversity of them? But as their catching is not destructive, but saving, so must all their baits be. They must quarter dove-like simplicity and serpentine wisdom together, as he commanded them, who sent them on this embassy.

3. Their third duty is *Fidelity;* and that both in the matter of their embassy, and in the manner of delivering it. In the matter, they must look to their commission, and declare the whole counsel of God, not adding nor abating any thing. We know how heinously kings take the presumption of their ambassadors in this kind; though reason be pretended, and perhaps justly, yet, even they account obedience better than sacrifice: yea, some of them have been so precise and tender of their prerogative, that they have preferred a damageable affront to their commands, before a profitable breach of them. And above all kings, this King who is above them all, hath good reason to be punctual in this; for princes' instructions may be imperfect, and as things may fall out, prejudicial to their purpose, but His are most complete, and always so suitable to His end, that they cannot be bettered. The matter, then, of this embassy is unalterable: in that, these ambassadors must be faithful. Faithful, also, in the manner of delivering it; with singleness and diligence. [1.] With *singleness*, free from by-respects, not seeking their own honour or advantage, but their Master's; abasing themselves where need is, that He may be magnified; never hazarding the least part of His rights for the greatest benefit that could accrue to themselves. The treachery of an ambassador is of all the most intolerable;—to deceive under trust. If any who bear the name of God's legates, think to deceive Him, they deceive themselves; He cannot be mocked. They must all appear before His judgment-seat, and be unveiled before men and angels. Knowing, therefore, *the terrors of the Lord*, let them go about His work with candour and singleness of heart. And [2.] with *diligence*. *He that is diligent in his work, shall stand before princes*, saith the wise prince. Prov. xxii. 29. The great

Prince of Peace shall admit those to stand eminently before him, who are diligent in his embassy of peace. Such are they who make it their meat and their drink, as Christ himself did, who accept all occasions, yea, seek and make occasions, to treat with men for God. That oracle-like preaching of one sermon or two in a year, is far from this sedulity and instancy in treating, which are requisite in God's ambassadors. The prince of darkness hath more industrious agents than so: they *compass sea and land to make a proselyte;* they hold to it, and are content to lose many a labour, that some one may prosper.

And this may meet with the discontent that some ministers take at their great pains and little success. We see, Satan's ministers can comport with this. Since it is no just exception against God's work, still be in thy business, and refer the issue to thy Master. *Wait on God, and do good*, saith the royal Psalmist. Psalm xxxvii. 3. *Sow thy seed in the morning, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which will prosper*, saith the wise son. Eccl. xi. 6. As the moralist speaks of benefits, a man must lose many words among the people, that some one may not be lost. *I am all things to all*, saith our Apostle, *that I may gain some.* 1 Cor. ix. 20. And though in continuing diligent, thy diligence should still continue fruitless to others, to thee it shall not be so. Thy God is a discreet Lord: as He hath not put events into thy hand, He will not exact them at thy hands. Thou art to be accountable for planting and watering, but not for the increase. Be not wanting in thy task, and thou shalt not want thy recompense. Shouldest thou be forced to say with the Prophet, *I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought*, in regard of success, yet, if thou hast laboured, so laboured as to spend thy strength in that service, thou must add with him, *Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.* Isa. xlix. 4.

4. The last duty recommendable to these ambassadors, is *Magnanimity*, which is no less needful than the preceding. Many a difficulty and discouragement is to be encountered in this service, and, which is worse, some temptations of prosperity and advancement. If you persist to plead freely for your Master, you shall be the very mark of the world's enmity. What mischief is there, that Christ hath not foretold his disciples to expect at their hands? For Christ circumvents no man to his service; he tells them what they shall meet with: *They shall prosecute you through their courts*, ecclesiastical and civil; *deliver you up to councils*, and *scourge you in their synagogues, and accuse before governors and kings* (Matt. x. 17); yea, *they shall think they do God good service when they kill you.* His own ambassadors. Many mountains are to be climbed in going this embassy, and the rage of many a tempest to be endured. *His animis opus est, et pectore firmo.* Courage, then, ambassadors of the Most High! See if you can rise above the world, and tread upon her frownings with the one foot, and her deceitful smilings with the other. Slight her proffers, and contemn likewise her contempts. There is honour enough in the employment, to cause you to answer all oppositions with disdain. Let it be as impossible to turn you aside from your integrity, as the sun from its course. For that message which you carry, shall be glorious in the end: it shall conquer all opposite powers. When you seem exposed

in your voyage to the fury of winds and waves, remember what you carry. *Cæsarem vehis, et fortunam ejus*, as he said; it cannot suffer shipwreck. Let no sufferings dismay you. For a generous ambassador will always account it far more honourable to suffer the worst things for doing the best service he can to his master, than to enjoy the world's best rewards for the least point of disloyalty. And if ever Master was worthy the suffering for, yours is. Happy are you when they persecute you for his sake, as himself hath told, Matt. v. 10. There are honourable examples to look back to—*So persecuted they the prophets;* and a precious recompense to look forward to—*Great is your reward in heaven.* Our blessed Redeemer refused no hardships for the working out of this peace, which is your embassy. He knew what entertainment did abide him in the world, what contempts would be put upon him by mankind which he came to redeem; he knew of the full cup of his Father's wrath, that he was to drink for them; yet, resolution arising from love, climbed over all these mountains, and happily conquering all these difficulties, attained the desired end. Worthy ambassadors, follow this generous Leader in promulgating the peace he hath purchased. Tread his steps who *endured the cross and despised the shame*, and your journey's end shall be suitable to his who *is set down at the right hand of the Father.* Heb. xii. 2. Well did St. Paul study this copy when he said, *I know that bonds abide me everywhere; but I care for none of these things, so that I may finish my course with joy.* Acts xx. 24. The looking over to that great end, is the great means of surmounting the hardest things that intervene. The eyeing of that much, will make an undaunted ambassador. And that this lesson of courage is very pertinent for them, will appear by Christ's own urging it upon the first legates he sent out, when he dwelt here below: *Fear not*, saith he, *them that can kill the body*, &c. Matt. x. 28; where, methinks, he propounds, as the chief incentive of courage to these ambassadors, the joint consideration of those to whom they are sent, and of Him who sends them. For, seriously considered, it must needs be found most incongruous, that ambassadors of God should be afraid to speak to men. Fear not them; the utmost they can do, reacheth no further than the tabernacles of clay. Nor can they touch that without permission: not a hair of their head falls without notice of their Master. But suppose the highest, let them kill the body; thither goes their rage and no further. *But fear Him who can kill both body and soul.* Fear not, but fear. As this fear hath better cause, so it is the only expelling cause of the other fear. Nothing begets so generous and undaunted spirits as the fear of God: no other fear, none of those base ones that torment worldly men, dare claim room where that fear lodgeth. The only cause of these legates' fears is the inconsideration of their Master. Would they remember him much, it would ennoble their spirits to encounter the hardest evils of life, and death itself, courageously in his service. Their reward is preserved for them, and they for it; yea, it alone puts them into full possession. For their Master, beyond all kings, hath this privilege: he can not only restore life lost in his service, but, for a life subject to death, yea, a dying life, can give immortality, and, for their sufferings, light and momentary, an eternal weight of glory. Let

them be impoverished in his service, it is the best bargain in the world to lose all for him. Let them be scourged and stigmatized for the ignominy of these sufferings, the spirit of glory shall rest upon them. If that Persian prince could so prize his Zopyrus, who was mangled for his service, how much more will this Lord esteem those who suffer so for him! He is the tenderest King over his servants in the world. Those who touch them, touch the apple of his eye. Let his messengers, then, despise the worst the world can do against them; yea, let them say of death, as he said of it to his adversaries, Anytus and Melitus, *Kill me they may, but they cannot hurt me.*

The lessons to those to whom these ambassadors are sent, are: 1st, Do not dishonour them. Remember David and the king of Ammon. No king resents this so much as God: *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.*

2dly. Slight not their message: know whence it comes. This *not discerning* of holy things, is the pest of Christians. The Apostle specifieth it in the Lord's body. 1 Cor. xi. 29; it is so in the Lord's word. He condescends, in using earthen creatures, to explain the choicest of heavenly mysteries, and earthen vessels to convey these treasures. And if that which He intended for their advantage, the wretched sons of men make it a stumbling-block, and if they contemn the grace, for the meanness of the persons that are made conveyors and instruments of it, what may they expect?

3dly. Respect even the ambassadors for His sake whom they represent, *counting them worthy of double honour.* For this is the will of your Lord and their Lord, your King and their King. And to this King immortal, be all honour, and glory, and praise, by all the churches, world without end. Amen.

AN

EXPOSITION OF THE CREED.

---

1 Tim. iii. 9.

Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

That which was the Apostle's practice, as he expresses it, 1 Cor. ix. 22, is the standing duty of all the ministers of the same Gospel; *To the weak to become as weak, to gain the weak, and all things to all men, that if by any means they may save some.* And truly, one main part of the observance of that rule, is, in descending to the instruction of the most ignorant in the principles of the Christian religion. What I aim at, at this time, is, a very brief and plain exposition of the Articles of our Faith as we have them in that summary Confession; not staying you at all on the antiquity and authority of it, both of which are confessed. Whether it was penned by the Apostles, or by others in their time, or soon after it, it doth very clearly and briefly contain the main of their Divine doctrine.

But though it be altogether consonant with the Scriptures, yet, not being a part of the canon of them, I choose these words as pertinent to our intended explication of it. They are, indeed, here, as they stand in the context, a rule for deacons; but without question, taken in general, they express the great duty of all who are Christians, *to keep the mystery of faith, in a pure conscience.*

You see clearly in them a rich jewel, and a precious cabinet fit for it; *the mystery of faith* laid up and kept *in a pure conscience.* And these two are not only suitable, but inseparable, as we see in the first chapter of this Epistle, ver. 10: they are preserved and lost together, they suffer the same shipwreck; the casting away of the one, is the shipwreck of the other: if the one perish, the other cannot escape. Every believer is the temple of God; and as the tables of the Law were kept in the Ark, this *pure conscience* is the Ark that holds *the mystery of faith.* You think you are believers, you do not question that, and would take it ill that others should. It is very hard to convince men of unbelief, directly and in itself. But if you do believe this truth, that the only receptacle of saving faith, is, a purified conscience, then, I beseech you, question yourselves concerning *that:* being truly answered in it, it will resolve you touching your faith, which you are so loth to question in itself. Are your consciences pure? Have you a living hatred and antipathy against all impurity? Then, surely, faith is there; for it is the peculiar virtue of faith to *purify the heart,* (Acts xv. 9,) and the heart so purified, is the proper residence of faith, where it dwells and rests as in its natural place. But have you consciences that can lodge pride, and lust, and malice, and covetousness, and such like pollutions? Then, be no more so impudent as to say, you believe, nor deceive yourselves so far as to think you do. The blood of Christ

never speaks peace to any conscience but the same that it *purifies from dead works to serve the living God.* Heb. ix. 13, 14. As that blood is a sacrifice to appease God's wrath, so, it is a laver to wash our souls; and, to serve both ends, it is as was the blood of legal sacrifices, both offered up to God and sprinkled upon us, as both are expressed in the Apostle's words there. Do not think that God will throw this jewel of faith into a sty or kennel, a conscience full of defilement and uncleanness. Therefore, if you have any mind to these comforts and the peace that faith brings along with it, be careful to lodge it where it delights to dwell, *in a pure conscience.* Notwithstanding the unbelieving world mocks the name of *purity*, yet, study you, above all, that purity and holiness which may make your souls a fit abode for *faith*, and for that peace which it worketh, and for that Holy Spirit who works both in you.

Faith is either the doctrine which we believe, or that grace by which we believe that doctrine. Here, I conceive, it is both, met and united in the soul. As they say of the understanding in the schools, *Intelligendo fit illud quod intelligit*, so, faith, apprehending its proper object, is made one with it. Faith is kept *in a pure conscience;* that is, both that pure doctrine of the Gospel which faith receives, and that faith which receives it, are together fitly placed and preserved, when they are laid up in a pure conscience. The doctrine of faith cannot be received into, nor laid up in the soul, but by that faith which believes it; and that faith hath no being, without believing that doctrine. And both are fitly called *the mystery of faith.* The doctrine is mysterious, and it is a mysterious work, to beget faith in the heart to receive it. For the things we must believe, are very high and heavenly, and our hearts are earthly and base till the Spirit renew them. In our Confession of faith we have both expressed. The first word is, a profession of faith, which receives the doctrine as true, *I believe;* and the articles themselves contain the sum of the doctrine believed. And if we who profess this faith, have within us *pure consciences*, wherein *the mystery of faith*—the doctrine of faith believed, and the grace of faith believing it, both together as one,—may reside, dwell, and be preserved, then is the text completely answered in the present subject.

Remember, then, since we profess this faith, which is the proper seat of faith. Not our books, our tongues only, or memories, or judgment, but our conscience; and not our natural conscience defiled and stuffed with sin, but renewed and sanctified by grace. *Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.*

I believe in God the Father.]

Not to insist here on the nature of faith, taking it as comprehensively as we can, it is no other than a supernatural belief of God, and confidence in Him. Whether we call God, or the word of God, the object of faith, there is no material difference; for it is God in the word, as revealed by the word, that is that object. God is that *veritas incomplexa* (as they speak) which faith embraces; and the word, the *veritas complexa* which contains what we are to conceive of God, and to believe concerning Him. As in the Gospel, the peculiar object of that faith which saves fallen man, it is all one whether we say it is Christ or the promises; for it is Christ revealed and held forth in the promises,

that faith lays hold on. *In Him are all the promises of God, Yea, and in him, Amen.* 2 Cor. i. 20. So that it is all one act of faith that lays hold on Christ, and on the promises, for they are all one: he is in them, and therefore faith rests on them, because they include Christ who is our rest and our peace; as a man at once receives a ring and the precious stone that is set in it. This once rightly understood, any further dispute about placing faith in the understanding or in the will, is, possibly, in itself not at all needful: sure I am, it is no way useful for you. Take heed of carnal, profane presumption, for that will undo you; and labour to be sure of such a faith as dwells in a pure conscience, and it will be sure not to deceive you.

That confidence which this expression bears, believing in God, supposes certainly, (as all agree,) a right belief concerning God, both that He is, and what He is, according as the word reveals Him: especially what He is relating to us. These three we have together, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* 1. That He *is*. 2. To trust His word, believing that He is true to His promises, *a rewarder of them that seek Him.* 3. Upon these follows *coming to Him*, which is this believing in that God which the Apostle speaks of, that reliance and resting of the soul upon Him, which results from that right belief concerning Him, and trusting the testimony of His word, as it reveals Him.

We have discoursed of the attributes of God elsewhere, as also of the Trinity, which is here expressed in these words: *I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* That sublime mystery is to be cautiously treated of, and rather humbly to be admired, than curiously dived into. The day will come, (truly, *a day*, for here we are beset with the gloomy nightly shades of ignorance,) wherein we shall *see Him as He is.* 1 John iii. 2. In the mean time, let us devoutly worship Him, as He has revealed Himself to us; for this is the true way to that Heavenly country where we shall see Him face to face. And it is our interest here to believe the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead, and to trust in Them as such: for this is the spring of all our hope, that the Middle of the THREE became our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit our guide and teacher, and the Father reconciles us to Himself by the Son, and renews us by the Spirit.

The Father.] First, the Father of His only begotten Son, Christ, and through him, our Father by the grace of adoption. And so Christ does clearly insinuate the order of our filiation: *I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.* He says not, to *our* Father, but, *to my Father and your Father;* first, mine, and then, yours through me.

Almighty.] This also belongs to the attributes of God; so we shall be but short on it here. *Almighty*, able in Himself to do all things, and the source of all power in others, all the power in the creature being derived from Him; so that it cannot altogether equal His, nor resist Him, no, nor at all *be* without Him. Whosoever they be who boast in their own strength in any kind, and swell highest in conceit of it, they are yet but as a brittle glass in the hand of God: He can not only break it to pieces by the strength of his hand, but if He do

but withdraw His hand from supporting it, it will fall and break of itself.

Maker of heaven and earth.] The Son and the Spirit were, with the Father, authors of the Creation: but it is ascribed to the Father, particularly, in regard of the order and manner of Their working. Whether natural reason may evince the creation of the world, we will not dispute; we know that he who had very much of that, and who is the great master of it in the schools, could not see it by that light. Yet there is enough in reason to answer all the false cavils of profane men, and very much to justify the truth of this we believe. However, we must endeavour to believe it by Divine faith, according to that of the Apostle, Heb. xi. 3. *By faith we believe that the worlds were framed by the word of God.* And this is the first article we meet withal in the Scriptures, and our faith is put to it in a very high point in the very entrance, Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth:*—speaking like Himself; it is not proved by demonstrations, or any kind of arguments, but is asserted by the authority of God. And with that which begins the Books of the Law, John begins his gospel; that upon his word who, by His word, made the world, we may believe that He did so.

This is fitly added to the title of Almighty, as a work of almighty power, and therefore, a clear testimony of it; and both together well suit with our profession of believing in Him. For this is a main support of our faith, to be persuaded of His power on whom we trust. *Our God is able to deliver us,* said they, Dan. iii. 17. And Abraham, the Apostle says, *offered up his son, accounting* (or reasoning with himself, or laying his reckoning) *that God was able to raise him from the dead.* Heb. xi. 19.

We make more bold to speak out our own questioning of the love and good-will of God, because we think we have some reason in that from our own unworthiness; but if we would sound our own hearts, we should often find in our distrust some secret doubtings of God's *power,* Psal. lxxviii. 19. *Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?* said they; though accustomed to miracles, yet still unbelieving. We think we are strongly enough persuaded of this, but our hearts deceive us. *Quæ scimus cùm necesse non est, ea in necessitate nescimus,* says Bernard: The things which we seem to know when it is not necessary for us to know them, we find, when necessary, that we know not. *The heart is deceitful.* Jer. xvii. 9—where he is speaking of trusting. It is not for nothing, that God by His prophets so often inculcates this doctrine of His power, and this great instance of it, the Creation, when He promises great deliverances to His Church, and the destruction of their enemies. See Isa. xlv. 12, and li. 12. What can be too hard for Him, who found it not too hard to make a world of nothing? If thou look on the public, the enemies of the Church are strong: if on thyself, thou hast indeed strong corruptions within, and strong temptations without: yet, none of these are almighty, as thy God is. What is it thou wouldst have done, that He cannot do if He think fit? And if He think it not fit, if thou art one of His children, thou wilt think with Him; thou wilt reverence His wisdom, and rest satisfied with His will. This is believing indeed; the rolling all our desires and

burdens over upon an almighty God. And where this is, it cannot choose but establish the heart in the midst of troubles, and give it a calm within in the midst of the greatest storms.

And try what other confidences you will, they shall prove vain and lying in the day of trouble. He that thinks to quiet his mind and find rest by worldly comfort, is, as Solomon compares his drunkard, *like one that lies down in the midst of the sea, or, that sleepeth on the top of a mast:* Prov. xxiii. 34, he can have but unsettled rest and repose, that lies there. *But he that trusteth in the Lord, is as Mount Sion that cannot be removed.* Psal. cxxv. 1. When we lean upon other props besides God, they prove broken reeds that not only fail, but pierce the hand that leans on them. Jer. xvii. 7.

There is yet another thing in this Article, which serves further to uphold our faith, That of necessity. He who made the world by His power, doth likewise rule it by His providence. It is so great a fabric as cannot be upheld and governed by any less power than that which made it. He did not frame this world, as the carpenter his ship, to put it into other hands and look no more after it; but as He made it, so He is the continual pilot of it, sits still at the helm, and guides it; yea, He commands the winds and seas, and they obey Him. And this serves much for the comfort of the godly, but I cannot here insist on it.

And in Jesus Christ.]

The two great works of God, by which He is known to us, are, Creation and Redemption, which is a new or second creation. The Son of God, as God, was with the Father, as the worker of the former; but as God-man, He is the author of the latter. St. John begins his gospel with the first, and from that passes on to the second. *In the beginning was The Word—by Him were all things made.* But at ver. 14, the other is expressed: *The Word was made flesh, and he dwelt among us,* had a tent like ours, and made of the same materials. He adds, *He was full of grace and truth;* and for this end (as there follows,) *that we might all receive of his fulness, grace for grace.* And this is that great work of new creation. Therefore the prophet Isaiah, foretelling this great work from the Lord's own mouth, speaks of it in these terms, Chap. li. 16. *That I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto Sion, Thou art my people.* That making of a new people to Himself in Christ, is as the framing of heaven and earth. Now this restoration by Jesus Christ, supposes the ruin and misery of man by his fall, that sin and death under which he is born. This we all seem to know, and acknowledge, and well we may, for we daily feel the woful fruits of that bitter root: but the truth is, the greatest part of us are not fully convinced, and therefore, do not consider this gulf of wretchedness into which we are fallen. If we were, there would be more cries amongst us for help to be drawn out and delivered from it: this great Deliverer, this Saviour would be of more use, and of more esteem with us. But I cannot now insist on that point.

Only consider, that this makes the necessity of a Mediator. The disunion and distance which sin hath made betwixt God and man, cannot be made up but by a Mediator, one to come betwixt; so that

there is now no believing in God the Father, but by this believing in Jesus his Son; no appearing without horror, yea, without perdition, before so just a Judge highly offended, but by the intervention of so powerful a Reconciler, able to satisfy and appease Him. And He tells it us plainly and graciously, that we mistake not our way, *No man cometh unto the Father but by me.* John xiv. 6.

Few are our thoughts concerning God and returning to Him; but if we have any, this is our unhappiness, that naturally we are subject to leave out Christ in them. We think there is something to be done: we talk of repentance, of prayer, and of amendment, though we have not these neither. But if we had these, there is yet one thing necessary above all these, which we forget; there is absolute need of a Mediator to make our peace, and restore us into favour with God, One who must for that end do and suffer for us what we can neither do nor suffer. Though we could shed rivers of tears, they cannot wash out the stain of any one sin; yea, there is some pollution in our very tears, so that they themselves have need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.] Our anointed Saviour, anointed to be our King, our great High-priest, and our Prophet, and in all these, our Saviour: our *prophet* to teach us the way of salvation, our *priest* to purchase it for us, and our *king* to lead and protect us in the way, and to bring us safe to the end of it. Thus is his name full of sweetness and comfort, *mel in ore, in aure melos, in corde medicina,* as Bernard speaks: Honey in the mouth, music to the ear, a cordial to the heart. It is a rich ointment, and, in the preaching of the Gospel, *an ointment poured forth,* (Cant. i. 3.) diffusing its fragrant smell, for which the *virgins,* the chaste, purified souls of believers, *love him;* such as have *their senses exercised,* as the Apostle speaks (Heb. v. 14.), their spiritual smelling not obstructed with the pollutions of the world, but quick and open to receive and be refreshed with the smell of this precious name of Jesus.

His only Son.] Other sons He hath, angels and men, by creation, and adoption, but this His only begotten Son, as God, by eternal and ineffable generation, and as man, peculiarly the Son of God, both in regard of his singular unexampled conception by the Holy Ghost, and by that personal union with the Deity which accompanied that conception, and by that fulness of all grace which flowed from that union. The unfolding of these would require a long time, and, after all, more would remain unsaid and unconceived by us; for, *his generation who can declare?* Isa. liii. 8.

Let us remember this, that our sonship is the product of His. *He is the only begotten Son of God,* and yet, *To as many as receive Him, He gave this privilege, to be the Sons of God.* John i. 12 and 14.

Our Lord.] Both by our loyal subjection to him, and our peculiar interest in him: these go together. Willing subjection and obedience to his laws, is an inseparable companion, and therefore a certain evidence, of our interest in his grace.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost.]

This is that *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh;* the King of Glory after a manner divesting himself of his royal robes,

and truly putting on *the form of a servant*, the Holy Ghost framing him a body in the virgin's womb. Not that it was impossible to have made his human nature sinless in the ordinary way, (though the schools usually give that reason,) but that by that miraculous and peculiar manner of birth, he might be declared to be more than man, as being a way more congruous both to the greatness of his person and the purity of his human nature.

Born of the Virgin Mary.]

He was not only of the same nature with man, which he might have been by a new created humanity, but of the same stock, and so, a fit Saviour, a *near kinsman*, as the word which in Hebrew is a *Redeemer*, doth signify; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. We see, then, the person of our Mediator is very fit for that his office, having both the natures of the parties at variance which he was to reconcile. And this happy meeting of *God* and *man* in the person of Christ, to look no further, was a very great step to the agreement, and a strong pledge of its accomplishment. To see the nature of man who was an enemy, received into so close embraces with the Deity, as within the compass of one person, promised infallibly a reconcilement of the persons of men unto God. There the treaty of peace began, and was exceedingly promoted by that very beginning, so, that in it, there was a sure presage of the success: it was indeed, as they say of a good beginning, *dimidium facti*, half done. Had God and man treated any where but in the person of Christ, a peace had never been concluded, yea, it had broken up first; but being in him, it could not fail, for in him they were already one, one person, so there they could not but agree. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* 2 Cor. iv. 19.

Considering the work to be done in this agreement, as well as the persons to be agreed, it was altogether needful that the Undertaker should be God and man, *Humana Divinitas et Divina humanitas.* The mediation was not a bare matter of word, but there was such a wrong done as required a satisfaction should be made. We speak not of what God might absolutely have done, but what was to be done suitable to God's end, which was for the joint glory of justice and mercy, *that mercy and truth might meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other.* And because the party offending was not able for it, he that would effectually sue for him, must likewise satisfy for him. And this Jesus Christ did, as here follows. Now, that he might do this, it was necessary that he should be *God* able to save, and *man* fit to save man; *man* that he might suffer, and *God* that his sufferings might be satisfying: *man* that he might die, and *God* that his death might have value to purchase life to us.

The Son was fit to be incarnate for this work, the Middle Person in the Godhead to be man's mediator with God.—That which we had lost, was, the dignity of the sons of God, and therefore, His *only Son* alone was fit to restore us to it. The beauty defaced in us, was, the image of God; therefore, the repairing and re-imparting of it, was a fit work for his purest and most perfect image, His Son, *the character of His person*, Heb. i. 3.

Now, this incarnation of the Word, the Son of God, is the foundation of all our hopes; the sense of that great promise, *The seed of the*

woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and of many others of the same substance in the Prophets; the great salvation so often foretold, and so long expected by the Jews. When this was fulfilled, that a virgin did conceive by the Holy Ghost, then did the *heavens drop down righteousness from above, and the earth bring forth salvation.* Isa. xlv. 8. This seems to be that which the Church did so earnestly wish, *Oh, that thou wert as my brother!* Cant. viii. 1.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate.] Though all his life was one continual act of suffering, from his living in the cratch to his hanging on the cross, yet, because of the shortness of this Confession, as likewise because this last act was the greatest, and most remarkable of his sufferings, and the Scripture itself doth, as such, mention it most frequently, therefore it is here immediately subjoined to the article of his birth.

It is not for nothing that we have the name of the Roman judge here expressed, under whom he suffered: though it is nothing to his credit, yet, it is to the credit of Divine wisdom, even this; considering the nature and end of Christ's death, it being to satisfy a pronounced sentence of justice, though for others, it was a very agreeable circumstance, that he should not be suddenly or tumultuarily murdered, but be judicially, though unjustly, condemned.

Crucified.] Besides, it made his suffering more public and solemn; and the Divine providence ordered this, that he should suffer under a Roman judge, and so fall under this Roman kind of punishment, being in itself a very shameful and painful kind of death, and, by the sentence of the Law, accursed, that we might have the more evidence of our deliverance from that shame, and pain, and curse, that were due to us. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him,* says the Prophet, *and by his stripes we are healed.* Isa. liii. 5.

Suffered.] That he died, and what kind of death, you see, is expressed. But as many particular sufferings of his body are not here mentioned, so none of those of his soul, but all are comprehended in this general word, *He suffered.* Those were too great to be duly expressed in so short a form, and therefore, are better expressed by supposing them, and including them only in this, *He suffered.* As he that drew the father, among others, beholding the sacrificing of his own daughter, signified the grief of the rest in their gestures, and visages, and tears, but drew the father vailed; so here, the crucifying and death of our Saviour are expressed, but the unspeakable conflicts of his soul are vailed under the general term of suffering. But surely, that invisible cup which came from his Father's hand, was far more bitter than the gall and vinegar from the hand of his enemies; the piercing of his soul, far sharper than the nails and thorns. He could answer these sweetly with *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But those other pangs drew from him another kind of word, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Died.] No less would serve, and therefore he was *obedient even unto the death,* as the sentence against us did bear, and the sacrifices of the Law did prefigure. When the sacrifices drew back and went unwillingly to the place, the heathens accounted it an ill presage. Never was sacrifice more willing than Christ. *I lay down my life for my*

sheep, says he, *and no man taketh it from me.* John x. 15, 18. *As a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He gave his back to the smiters.* Isa. liii. 7. *For this hour came I into the world.* John xviii. 37. And this his death is our life: though by it we are not freed from this temporal death, yet, which is infinitely more, we are delivered from eternal death, and which is yet more, entitled to eternal life; and therefore, do no more suffer this temporal death as a curse, but enjoy it as a blessing, and may look upon it now, (such as are in Christ, none other,) not only as a day of deliverance, but of coronation, the exchange of our present rags for long white robes, and a crown that fadeth not away.

Buried.] For the further assurance of his death, and glory of his resurrection; as likewise, to commend the grave to us, as now a very sweet resting-place: he hath warmed the cold bed of the grave to a Christian, that he needs not fear to lie down in it, nor doubt that he shall rise again, as we know, and are after to hear that *He* did.

Descended into Hell.] The more noise there hath been about this clause, I shall make the less. The conceit of the descent of Christ's soul into the place of the damned, to say no more nor harder of it, can never be made the necessary sense of these words; nor is there any other ground in Scripture, or any due end of such a descent, either agreed on, or at all allegeable, to persuade the choosing of it as the best sense of them. Not to contest other interpretations, I conceive, with submission, that it differs not much, possibly nothing, from the plain word of his burial. Not that the author or authors of this so brief a Confession, would express one thing by divers words, but that, it may be, in the more ancient copies, only the one of them hath been in the text, and in after copies, in transcribers' hands, the other hath crept into it out of the margin. But retaining it by all means as it is, it may signify the abode and continuance of Christ's body in the grave; in which time he seems to have been swallowed up of death, and that the pit had shut her mouth on him; but it appeared quickly otherwise, for, *The third day he arose from the dead.*

Refl. 1. These are great things indeed which are spoken concerning Jesus Christ, his birth and sufferings; but the greater our unhappiness, if we have no portion in them. To hear of them only, and to enjoy nothing of them, is most miserable; and thus it is through our unbelief. Were it as common to believe in him, as to repeat these words, or to come to church and hear this gospel preached, then you would all make pretty good plea on it. But believe it, it is another kind of thing to believe than all that, or than any thing that the most of us yet know. My brethren, do not deceive yourselves. That common highway faith will not serve; you are, for all that, still unbelievers in Christ's account; and if so, for all the riches of comfort that are in him, you can receive none from him. It is a sad word that he says, *Because ye believe not in me, ye shall die in your sins.* John viii. 21. As if he should say, Though I died for sins, not mine own but others, yet, you remaining in ungodliness and unbelief, that shall do you no good; ye shall die in your sins for all that. It is such a faith as endears Christ to the soul, unites it to him, makes Christ and it one, that makes all that is his to become ours. Then, we shall con-

clude aright, Christ hath suffered, therefore I shall not. As he said to them who came to take him, *Is it I you seek? Then let these go free;* so, to the Law and the justice of God, he says, seeing you have sought and laid hold on me, and made me suffer, let these go free who lay hold on me by faith: if you have any thing to say to them, I am to answer for them, yea, I have done it already.

2. You that believe and live by this death, be often in reviewing it and meditating on it, that your souls may be ravished with the admiration of such love, and warmed with a reflex love to him. *Mira Dei dignitas, mira indignitas nostra.* Other wonders, as you say, last for a while, but this is a lasting wonder; not to the ignorant,—the cause of wonder at other things is ignorance indeed, but this is an everlasting wonder to those who know it best, *viz.*, to the very angels. Let that loved Jesus be fixed in your hearts, who was for you nailed to the cross: *Donec totus fixus in corde, qui totus fixus in cruce.* St. Bernard wonders that men should think on any thing else: *Quantæ insanæ post tanti Regis adventum aliis negotiis!* Surely it is great folly, to think and esteem much of any thing here, after his appearing: the sun arising drowns all the stars. And withal, be daily crucifying sin in yourselves, be avenged on it for his sake, and kill it because it killed him.

3. Will you think any thing hard to do or suffer for him, who undertook and performed to the full so much for you? If you had rather be your own than Christ's, much good do it you with yourselves; but know that if you are not Christ's, but your own, you must look for as little of him to be yours. If ye be your own, you must bear all your own sins, and all the wrath that is due to them. But if you like not that, and resolve to be no more your own, but Christ's, then what have you to do but cheerfully to embrace, yea, earnestly to seek all opportunities to do him service?

4. These are the steps of Christ's humiliation; look on them, then, so as to study to be like him particularly in that. Surely, the soul that hath most of Christ, hath most humility. It is the lessen he peculiarly recommends to us from his own example, which is the shortest and most effectual way of teaching: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* Matt. xi. 29. He says well, *Erubescat homo superbus esse, propter quem humilis factus est Deus:* Let man be ashamed to be any longer proud, for whom God himself humbled himself so low. *Intolerabilis est impudentia, ut ubi se exinanivit majestas, vermiculus infletur et intumescat.* He became humble to expiate our pride, and yet we will not banish that pride which undid us, and follow that way of salvation which is humility. Jesus Christ is indeed the lily of the valleys; he grows no where but in the humble heart.

Rose again the third day.]

When humbled to the lowest, then nearest his exaltation, as Joseph in the prison. He could die, for he was a man, and a man for that purpose, that he might die; but he could not be overcome by death, for he was God: yea, by dying, he overcame death, and so shewed himself truly the Lord of life. He strangled that lion in his own den. The whale swallowed Jonah, but it could not digest him;

it was forced to cast him up again at the appointed time, the same with the time here specified, wherein the prophet was a figure of this great Prophet, Jesus Christ. The grave hath a terrible appetite; it devours all, and still cries, *give, give, and never hath enough*, as Agur says; yet, for all its appetite, Christ was too great a morsel for it to digest, too strong a prisoner for all its bars and iron gates to keep him in. *It was impossible he should be holden of it*, says St. Peter. Acts ii. 24.

He hath made a breach through death, opened up a passage on the other side of it into life, though otherwise, indeed, *vestigia nulla retrorsum*. They who believe, who lay hold on him by faith, they come through with him, follow him out at the same breach, pass through death into heaven. But the rest find not the passage out; it is as the Red Sea, passable only to the Israelites; therefore, they must of necessity sink quite downwards through the grave into hell, through the first death into the second, and that is the most terrible of all. *That* death is indeed what one called the other, *the most terrible of all terribles,—the king of terrors*, as it is in Job.

Now, the only assurance of that happy second resurrection to the life of glory hereafter is, the first resurrection here to the life of grace. *Blessed are they that are partakers of the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power.* Rev. xx. 6. For the resurrection of Jesus Christ is, to the believer, the evidence of his redemption completed, that all was paid by Christ, as our surety, and so, he set at liberty: which the Apostle teaches us, when he says, *He arose for our righteousness;* and again, *It is God that justifies: who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, or rather that is risen again.* Rom. viii. 33. Nor is it only the pattern and pledge of a believer's resurrection, but it is the efficient cause both of that last resurrection of his body to glory, and of the first, of his soul to grace.

The life of a believer is derived and flows forth from Christ as his head, and is mystically one life with his, and therefore, as himself expresseth it, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* John xiv. 19. Therefore is he called the *first begotten from the dead and the beginning*, Ἐν πᾶσιν πρωτεύων. Col. i. 18. He is first in all, and from him spring all those streams that *make glad the city of God.* Therefore the Apostle, in his thanksgiving for our new life and lively hopes, 1 Pet. i. 3, leaves not out that, *Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;* that is the conduit of all. And he expresses it in the same place, that we are *begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.* But, alas! we prejudge ourselves of all that rich comfort that is wrapt up in this, by living to ourselves and our lusts, and to the world, having not our consciences purified from dead works. How few of us are there who set that ambition of Paul before us, desiring above all things *to know him, and the power of his resurrection, to be made conformable unto his death!* Phil. iii. 10. That is the knowledge, as he there expresses it, a lively experienced knowledge of that power.

This rightly considered, will answer all our doubts and fears in the Church's hardest times. When in its deliverance there appears nothing but impossibilities, when so low that its enemies are persuaded to

conclude that it shall never rise again, and its friends are oppressed with fearing so much, yet, He who brought up his own Son Jesus from the dead, can and will restore His Church, for which He gave His only begotten Son to the death. *Son of man*, says he, *can these dry bones live?* Ezek. xxxii. 3. Thus often looks the Church's deliverance, which is there the proper sense. The prophet answered most wisely, *Lord, thou knowest*, q. d. It is a work only for Thee to know and to do; and by His Spirit they were revived. And so here, it looked hopeless as the disciples thought; they were at the point of giving it over, and blaming almost their former credulity: *We thought this should have been he that should have delivered Israel; and besides all this to-day is the third day.* True, the third day was come, but it was not yet ended; yea, he rose in the beginning of it, though they as yet knew it not, nor him to be present to whom they spake; but toward the end of it, they likewise knew that he was risen, when he was pleased to discover himself to them. Thus, though the enemies of the Church prevail so far against it, that it seems buried, and a stone laid to the grave's mouth, yet, it shall rise again, and at the very fittest, the appointed time, as Christ the third day. Thus the Church expresses her confidence, Hos. vi. 2: *In the third day he will raise us up.* Whatsoever it suffers, it shall gain by it, and be more beautiful and glorious in its restorement. *Mergas profundo, pulchrior exilit.*

He ascended into Heaven.] He rose again, not to remain on earth as before, but to return to his throne of majesty, from whence his love drew him, according to his prayer, John xvii., which was a certain prediction of it. He had now accomplished the great work he came for, and was therefore, by the covenant and transaction betwixt his Father and him, to be exalted to his former glory; the same person as before, but with the accession of another nature, which he had not before, and of a new relative dignity, being to sit as King of his Church, which he had purchased with his blood. And to express this, it is added,

And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father.] See Psal. cx. 1; Ephes. i. 20, 21. By which, according to his allusive sense, is expressed, not only his matchless glory, but his dominion and rule as Prince of Peace, the alone King of his Church, her supreme lawgiver and mighty protector, and conqueror of all his enemies; ruling his *holy hill of Zion*, with the golden sceptre of his word, and *breaking* his enemies, the strongest of them, *in pieces, with the iron rod* of his justice as we have it in the second Psalm. They attempt in vain to unsettle His throne; it is very far out of their reach, as high as the *right hand of God.* For ever, O God, thy throne is established in Heaven. What way is there for the worms of this earth to do any thing against it?

As in these is the glory of Christ, so, they contain much comfort to a Christian. In that very elevation of our nature to such dignity, is, indeed, as the ancients speak, *mira dignatio;* that our flesh is exalted above all the glorious spirits, the angels. And they adore the nature of man, in the person of man's glorified Saviour, the Son of God. This exaltation of Jesus Christ doth so reflect a dignity on the nature of mankind. But the right and possession of it, is not universal, but is contracted and appropriate to them that believe on him. *He took not*

on him the nature of angels, says the Apostle, *but the nature of the seed of Abraham*. Heb. ii. 16. He says not, the nature of *man*, though it is so, but, *of the seed of Abraham;* not so much because of his descent from that particular stock after the flesh, as in the spiritual sense of Abraham's seed, as it is at large cleared, Rom. ix. The rest of mankind forfeit all that dignity and benefit that arise to their nature in Christ, by their distance and disunion from him through unbelief. But the believer hath not only naturally one kind of being with the humanity of Christ, but is mystically one with the person of Christ, with whole Christ, God-man. And by virtue of that mysterious union, they who partake of it, partake of the very present happiness and glory of Christ: they have a real interest in whatsoever he is and hath, in all his dignities and power; and in that sense, they who are justified, are glorified. Rom. viii. 30. In that Christ is exalted, they are so too in him. Where a part, and the chief part of themselves, is, and is in honour, there they may account themselves to be. *Ubi portio mea regnat, ibi me regnare credo.* A man is said to be crowned, when the crown is set upon his head; now, our Head, Christ, is already crowned.

In sum, believers have, in this ascending and enthroning of Christ, unspeakable comfort through their interest in Christ, both in consideration of his present affection to them, and his effectual intercession for them, and in the assured hope which this gives them of their own after happiness and glory with him.

First, In all his glory he forgets them not. He puts not off his bowels with his low condition here, but hath carried it along to his throne. *Bene conveniunt, et in una sede morantur, majestas et amor.* His majesty and love suit very well, and both in their highest degree. As all the waters of his sufferings did not quench his love, nor left he it behind him buried in the grave, but it arose with him, being stronger than death; so, he let it not fall to the earth when he ascended on high, but it ascended with him, and he still retains it in his glory. And that our flesh which he assumed on earth, he took up into Heaven, as a token of indissoluble love betwixt him and those whom he redeemed, and sends down from thence as the rich token of his love, his Spirit into their hearts; so that these are mutual remembrances. Can he forget his own on earth, having their flesh so closely united to him? You see he does not; he feels what they suffer. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou* ME? And can they forget him whose Spirit dwells in them, and records lively to their hearts the passages of his love, and brings all those things to their remembrance, (as himself tells us, that Spirit would do,) and so proves indeed THE COMFORTER, by representing unto us that his love, the spring of our comforts? And when we send up our requests, we know of a friend before us there, a most true and a most faithful friend, who fails not to speak for us what we say, and much more. *He liveth*, says the Apostle, *to make intercession for us.* Heb. vii. 25. This is the ground of a Christian's boldness at the throne of grace: yea, therefore is the Father's throne the throne of grace to us, because the throne of our Mediator, Jesus Christ, is beside it: he sits at His right hand, otherwise it could be nothing to us but a throne of justice, and so, in regard of our guiltiness, a throne of terror

and affrightment, which we would rather flee from, than draw near unto.

Lastly, as we have the comfort of such a friend, to prepare access to our prayers there, which are the messengers of our souls, so, of this, that our souls themselves, when they remove from these houses of clay, shall find admission there through him. And this he tells his disciples again and again, and in them all his own, that their interest was so much in his ascending to his glory: *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.* John xiv. 3.

It will not be hard to persuade them who believe these things, and are portioners in them, to set their hearts on them, and, for that end, to take them off from all other things as unworthy of them: yea, it will be impossible for them to live without the frequent and sweet thoughts of that place where the Lord Jesus is. Yet, it is often needful to remind them that this cannot be enough done, and, by representing these things to them, to draw them more upwards. And it is best done in the Apostle's words: *If ye be risen with Christ, mind those things that are above, where he sits,* &c. Col. iii. 1. If ye be risen with him, follow him on, let your hearts be where He is. They that are one with him, the blessed Seed of the woman, do find that unity drawing them Heaven-wards. But, alas! the most of us are like the accursed seed of the serpent, basely grovelling on this earth, and licking the dust. The conversation of the believer is in Heaven, where he hath a Saviour, and from whence he looks for him. Truly, there is little of a true Christian here; (and that argues that there is little of the truth of Christianity among us, who are altogether here;) his head in Heaven, and his heart there, and these are the two principles of Life. Let us then suit the Apostle's advice, and so enjoy the comfort he subjoins, that by our affections being above, we may know, that *our life is hid with Christ in God,* and therefore, that *when He, who is our life, shall appear, we likewise shall appear with Him in glory.*

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.] We have in this to consider, 1. That there is a universal judgment. 2. That Christ is the Judge. 3. Something to be added of the quality of the judgment. All the three we have together, Acts xvii. 31. *Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained;—whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead.*

1. That there is a universal judgment, we know to be the frequent doctrine of the Scriptures, and it hath been ever the belief of the godly from the beginning, as we may perceive by that ancient prophecy of Enoch, recorded by St. Jude; and we are so to believe it as a Divine truth. And yet, there is so much just reason for it, that natural men, by the few sparkles of light in their consciences, have had some dark notions and conjectures of it, as is evident in Plato and the Platonics, and not only the philosophers, but the poets: it may be, too, that they have been helped by some scattered glimmerings of light concerning this, borrowed from the Jews, and traditionally passed from hand to hand among the heathen, and therefore disguised and altered after their fashion.

If we be persuaded that there is a Supreme Ruler of the world, who is most wise, and just, and good, this will persuade us, not only that there is some other estate and being than that we see here, appointed for man, the most excellent, the reasonable part of this visible world; but that there shall be a solemn judicial proceeding, in entering and instating him in that after-being. The many miseries of this present life, and that the best of men are usually deepest sharers in them, though it hath a little staggered, not only wise heathens, but sometimes some of the prime saints of God, yet, it hath never prevailed with any but brutal and debauched spirits, to conclude against Divine providence, but rather to resolve upon this, that of necessity there must be another kind of issue, a final catastrophe, reducing all the present confusions into order, and making odds even, as you say. *Cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi.* [CLAUDIAN.] It is true, that sometimes here, the Lord's right hand finds out His enemies, and is known by the judgment which He executes on them; and, on the other side, He gives some instances of His gracious providence to His Church, and to particular godly men, even before the sons of men; but these are but some few preludes and pledges of that great Judgment. Some He gives, that we forget not His justice and goodness; but much is reserved, that we expect not all, nor the most, here, but hereafter. And it is certainly most congruous, that this be done, not only in each particular apart, but most conspicuously in all together, that the justice and mercy of God may not only be accomplished, but acknowledged and magnified, and that, not only severally in the several persons of men and angels, but universally, jointly, and manifestly in the view of all, as upon one theatre, angels and men being at once, some of them the objects of that justice, others of mercy, but all of them spectators of both. Each ungodly man shall not only read, whether he will or no, the justice of God in himself and his own condemnation, which most of them shall do before that time in their soul's particular judgment; but they shall then see the same justice in all the rest of the condemned world, and the rest, in them; and, to the great increase of their anguish, they shall see likewise the glory of that mercy which shall then shine so bright in all the elect of God, from which they themselves are justly shut out, and delivered up to eternal misery. And, on the other side, the godly shall with unspeakable joy behold, not only a part, as before, but the whole sphere both of the justice and mercy of their God, and shall with one voice admire and applaud Him in both.

Besides, the process of many men's actions, cannot be full at the end of their life, as it shall be at that day: many have very large after-reckonings to come upon them for those sins of others to which they are accessory, though committed after their death; as the sins of ill-educated children to be laid to the charge of their parents, the sins of such as any have corrupted, either by their counsels, or opinions, or evil examples, &c.

2. HE, the Lord Jesus, shall be Judge in that great day. The Father, and Spirit, and His authority, are all one, for they are all one God and one Judge; but it shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour, God-man, *Jesus Christ*. That eternal WORD by whom all things were made, by *Him* all shall be judged; and so, he shall be

THE WORD in that last act of time, as in the first. He shall judicially pronounce that great and final sentence which shall stand unalterable in eternity; and not only as the eternal Son of God, but withal as the Son of Man, and so shall he sit as king, and invested with all power in Heaven and earth. *By that man whom He hath appointed to judge the quick and the dead.—The same Jesus shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* Acts xvii. 31; i. 11. The powers of the world and of hell are combined against his throne; therefore, they shall be his footstool sitting on that throne. And the crown which he hath purchased for believers, he shall set it on their heads with his own hand. This shall be exceeding joy and comfort to all that have believed on him, that their Redeemer shall be their Judge. He who was judged for them, shall judge them, and pass sentence according to that covenant of grace which holds in him, pronouncing them free from the wrath which he himself endured for them, and heirs of that life which he bought with his dearest blood.

And that gives no less accession to the misery of the wicked, that the same Jesus whom they opposed and despised, so many of them as heard any thing of him, He shall sit upon their final judgment, and pronounce sentence against them, not partially avenging his own quarrel on them,—no word of that,—but most justly returning them the reward of their ungodliness and unbelief. That great Shepherd shall thus make that great separation of his sheep from the goats.

3. Of the manner, we have thus much here, that He shall come from heaven as the Scriptures teach us, He shall visibly appear in the air; He shall come *in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*, Matt. xxiv. 30, attended with innumerable companies of glorious angels who shall serve him, both in the congregating of his elect, and in separating of them from the reprobate; but Himself, in the brightness of his own majesty, infinitely surpassing them all. 2 Thess. i. 7: *In flaming fire.* His first coming was mean and obscure, suiting his errand, for then he came to be judged; but that last coming shall be glorious, for he comes to judge, and his judgment shall be *in righteousness*, Acts xvii. 31. *Juste judicabit qui injuste judicatus est.* [AUGUSTINE.] There shall be no mis-alleging, or mis-proving, or mis-judging there. All the judgments of men, whether private or judicial, shall be re-judged there according to truth, by such a Judge before whom all things are naked. And not only shall He know and judge all aright, but all they who are judged, shall themselves be convinced that it is so. Then all will see that none are condemned but most deservedly, and that the Lord's justice is pure and spotless in them who perish, as his grace is without prejudice to his justice, it being satisfied in Christ for them who are saved. The Books shall be opened, those which men so willingly, the most of them, keep shut and clasped up, and are so unwilling to look into, their own accusing consciences; the Lord will proceed formally against the wicked according to the Books: no wrong shall be done them, they shall have fair justice, and they shall see what they would not look upon before, when by seeing, that might have been blotted out, and a free acquittance written in its stead. And *that* the believer shall read in his conscience at that day, which through the dimness of faith, and the dark, troubled estate of his soul, he many times could not read here below.

We are gaping still after new notions, but a few things wisely and practically known, drawn down from the head into the heart, are better than all that variety of knowing that men are so taken up with. *Paucis literis opus est ad mentem bonam.* This and such like common truths, we think we both know and believe well enough; but truly, if this great point, touching the great and last judgment, were indeed known and believed by us, it would draw our minds to more frequent and more deep thoughts of it; and were we often and serious in those thoughts, they would have such influence into all our other thoughts, and the whole course of our lives, as would much alter the frame of them from what they are. Did we think of this Gospel which we preach and hear, that we must then be judged by it, we should be now more ruled by it. But the truth is, we are willingly forgetful of these things; they are melancholy pensive thoughts, and we are content that the noise of affairs or any vanities fill the ears of our minds, that we hear them not. If we be forced at some times to hear of this last judgment to come, it possibly casts our conscience into some little trembling fit for the time, as it did Felix; but he was not, nor are we, so happy as to be shaken out of the custom and love of sin by it. We promise it fair, as he did, some other time; but if that time never come, this day will come, and they who shun to hear or think of it, shall then see it, and the sight of it will be as terrible and amazing, as the timely thoughts of it would have been profitable. It is, no doubt, an unpleasing subject to all ungodly, earthly minds; but surely, it were our wisdom to be of that mind now, that then we shall be forced to be of: we shall then read, by the light of that fire which shall burn the world, the vanity of all those things whereon we now dote so foolishly. Let us therefore be persuaded to think so now, and disengage our hearts, and fix them on him who shall then judge us. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. They only are happy who trust in Him.* That which is the affrightment of others, is their great joy and desire: they love and long for that day, both for their Saviour's glory in it, and their own full happiness; and that their *love to his appearing*, is to them a certain pledge of the *crown* they are to receive at his appearing. 2 Tim. iv. 8:—*at that day*, says the Apostle. This day he esteems more of than all his days; therefore, he names it no otherwise, than *that day*. How may we know what day it was he meant? His coronation-day. But of all men, surely, the hypocrite likes least the mention and remembrance of that day: there is no room for disguises there, all masks must off, and all things appear just as they are, and that is the worst news to him that can be.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.] God is both a *Spirit* and *Holy;* but this name personally taken, is peculiarly that of the Third Person proceeding from the Father and the Son, by a way that can neither be expressed nor conceived. Holy in himself, and the author and cause of all holiness in us.

It is neither useful nor safe for us to entangle our thoughts in disputes concerning this mystery, but it is necessary that we know, and acknowledge and believe in this *Holy Spirit.* It is He in whom, and by whom we believe. We cannot know God, nor the things of God,

but by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 1; nor say that Jesus is God, but by the same Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3. We know that this Holy Trinity co-operates in the work of our salvation: the Father hath given us His Son, and the Son hath sent us His Spirit, and the Spirit gives us faith, which unites us to the Son, and through him to the Father. The Father ordained our redemption, the Son wrought it, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it.

In the Holy Catholic Church.] The remaining Articles have the fruit of that great work, the sending of the Son of God in the flesh, his suffering, and dying, *&c.*—what it is, and to whom it belongs; the result of Christ's incarnation and death, *cui et cujas gratia.* Yea, the great design of God in the other great work, that of the first creation, was this second: He made the world that out of it he might make this *elect world,* which is called His Church. The Son fell on sleep, on a dead sleep, indeed the sleep of death on the cross, that out of his side might be framed his Spouse, which is his Church. The Holy Spirit moving upon the souls of men in their conversion, aims at this same end, the gathering and completing of his Church: He is the breath of life that breathed on these new creatures who make up this society. So then, this is as much as to say, I verily believe that God had such a purpose in making the world, and in sending His Son into it, and they both in sending the Spirit, and the Spirit in His working to make a holy Church, a number that should serve God here, and enjoy Him in eternity; and I believe, that God cannot fall short of His end, that blessed Trinity doth not project and work in vain; I believe, therefore, there is such a company, there is a *holy universal church.* Universal —diffused through the several ages, and places, and nations of the world. Holy—washed in the blood of Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit. That it is, which it hath in all ages continued from the beginning, and shall continue to the end of the world, increasing still and growing to its appointed perfection, amidst all the enmities and oppositions that it encounters in the world. *I send you forth,* says Christ, *as sheep among wolves.* Matt. x. 16. The preservation of the Church is a continuing miracle: it resembles Daniel's safety among the hungry lions, but prolonged from one age to another. The ship wherein Christ is, may be weather beaten, but it shall not perish.

So then, you see that this Confession is altogether no other than your acknowledgment of God in Himself, Three in One, and One in Three; and His works of the creation of the world, and redemption of man by his Son, made man for that purpose, and appropriate to them for whom it was designed by his Holy Spirit; and with this acknowledgment our reliance on this God as the author of our being and well-being.

The communion of saints.] This springs immediately from the former: if they make one Church, then they have a very near communion together. They are one body united to that glorious Head that is above; they have all one spiritual life flowing from him. And this communion holds not only on earth and in heaven apart, but even betwixt heaven and earth: the saints on earth make up the same body with those already in glory; they are born to the same inheritance by new birth, though the others are entered in possession before them.

This their common title to spiritual blessings, and eternal blessings prejudges none of them: their inheritance is such as is not lessened by the multitude of heirs; it is entire to each one. And that grace and salvation that flows from Christ, *the Sun of Righteousness*, is as the light of the sun where it shines; none hath the less because of others partaking of it. The happiness of the saints is called *an inheritance in light*, which all may enjoy without abatement to any. They have each one their crown: they need not, they do not envy one another, nor, *Ottoman*-like, one brother to kill another to reign alone. Yea, they rejoice in the happiness and salvation of one another; they are glad at the graces which God bestows on their brethren; for they know that they all belong to the same first owner, and return to His glory, and that whatsoever diversity is in them, they all agree and concentre in that service and good of the Church; and so, what each one hath of gifts and graces, belongs to all by virtue of this communion. Thus ought each of them to think, and every one of them humbly and charitably so to use what he hath himself, and ingenuously to rejoice in that which others have, as the Apostle reasons at large, 1 Cor. xii.

A holy Catholic Church—the communion of saints.] We may see the worth and the necessity of holiness, how much it is regarded in the whole work. For this very thing did Christ give himself for his Church, *that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it—that he might present it to himself a glorious church—holy.* Eph. v. 26. So it is the end of our redemption. And if we look as far forward as salvation, there it will be perfect holiness: nothing unclean shall enter that holy city, and *without holiness no man shall see God.* And look again as far back as our election: Eph. i. 4. *According as He hath chosen us in him—that we should be holy.* And those who are not partakers of this, do but delude themselves, in dreaming of an interest in the rest. There is no washing in the blood of Christ to *remission*, but withal *by the Spirit to sanctification;* no comfort to the unholy in their *resurrection*, because no hope of that to follow on it, which follows here, *eternal life.* No, *without shall be dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15. In the base and foolish opinion of the world, holiness is a reproach, or at the best, but a mean poor commendation, as you speak of it disdainfully, a *good, silly, holy body;* and men are more pleased with any other title: they had a great deal rather be called learned, or wise, or stout, or comely, than holy. *Malumus audire, O virum doctum, quam O virum bonum.* [Seneca.] But God esteems otherwise of it, whose esteem is the true rule of worth. That fore-cited place, *A glorious church:* How? *Holy and without blemish.* That is indeed the true beauty of the soul, makes it like God, and that is its comeliness. We see the Lord himself delights to be known much by this style, and to be glorified by it, *Holy, Holy, Holy.* So Exod. xv. 11: *Glorious in holiness.* And the Spirit of God is still called, *The Holy Spirit.* How much, then, are they mistaken concerning Heaven, who think to find the way to it out of the path of holiness, which is indeed *via regni*, the only way that leads unto it! Reprove *you* of unholiness, you say; you are not saints. No? So much the worse, for they who mean to share in the pardon of sin and eternal life, must be such. If you be content still not to be saints, go on: but know, that they who are not

in some measure saints in grace here, shall never be saints in glory hereafter.

Forgiveness of sins.] Notwithstanding forgiveness of sins, there is a necessity of holiness, though not as meriting it, yet, as leading unto happiness. But on the other side, notwithstanding the highest point of holiness we can attain, there is a necessity of this forgiveness of sins. Though believers make up a holy Church and company of saints, yet, there is a debt upon them that their holiness pays not; yea, they are so far from having a surplus for a standing treasure after all is paid, that all the holiness of the saints together will not pay the least farthing of that debt they owe. *As for me, I will walk in mine integrity*, says David, Psal. xxvi. 11. How then? Adds he, This shall justify me sufficiently? No, but *Redeem Thou me, and be merciful to me.* So, 1 John i. 6: *If we say, that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie.* And yet, in the next verse, though we do *walk in the light*, yet is there need of the *blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin;* and so throughout the Scriptures. All the integrity of the godly under the Law, did not exempt them from offering sacrifice, which was the expiation of sin in the figure, looking forward to that great and spotless Sacrifice that was to be slain for the sins of the world. And those who believe the Gospel, the application of that justifying blood that streams forth in the doctrine of the Gospel, is not only needful to wash in for their cleansing in their first conversion, but is to be re-applied to the soul, for taking off the daily contracted guiltiness of new sins. It is *a fountain opened* and standing open for sin and for uncleanness, as that sea of brass before the sanctuary. They that are clean have still need of washing, at least, their feet, as Christ speaks to St. Peter, John xiii. 10.

The consideration of that precious blood shed for our sins, is the strongest persuasive to holiness, and to the avoiding and hating of sin. So far is the doctrine of justification, rightly understood, from animating men to sin. But because of the woful continuance of sin in the godly, while they continue in this region of sin and death, therefore is there a continual necessity of new recourse to this great expiation. Thus St. John joins these two, 1 Eph. ii. 1, 2: *These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.*

You think it an easy matter, and a thing that for your own ease you willingly believe, the forgiveness of sins. It is easy indeed, after our fashion; easy to imagine that we believe such a thing when we hear it, because we let it pass and question it not; we think it may be true, and think no further on it, while we neither know truly what sin is, nor feel the weight of our own sins. But where a soul is convinced of the nature of sin, and its own guiltiness, there to believe forgiveness is not so easy a task.

In believing this forgiveness of sins, and so, the other privileges that attend it, there be these three things gradually leading one to the other. 1. To believe that there is such a thing, and that it is purchased by the death of Christ, and so attainable by coming unto him for it. 2. By this, the soul finding itself ready to sink under the

burden of its own sins, is persuaded to go to him, and lay over that load on him; and itself withal resolves to rest on him for this forgiveness. This is to believe in him *who is the Lord our righteousness.* 3. Upon this believing on him for forgiveness, follows a reflex believing of that forgiveness; not continually and inseparably, especially if we take the degree of assurance somewhat high, but yet, in itself, it is apt to follow, and often, in God's gracious dispensation, doth follow upon that former act of believing, through the clearness and strength of faith in the soul, and sometimes withal, is backed with an express, peculiar testimony of God's own Spirit. To believe, and to grow stronger in believing, and to aspire to the assurance of faith, is our constant duty; but that immediate testimony of the Spirit, is an arbitrary beam that God reserves in His own hand, yet, such a gift as we may not only lawfully seek, but do foolishly prejudice ourselves and slight it, if we neglect to seek it, and want so rich a blessing for want of asking, and withal, labouring to keep our hearts in a due disposition and frame for entertaining it. The keeping of our consciences pure, as much as may be, doth not only keep the comfortable evidence of pardon clearest and least interrupted within us, but is the likeliest to receive those pure joys which flow immediately into the soul from the Spirit of God. The testimony of our conscience is, if we damp it not ourselves, our *continual feast;* but that testimony of the Spirit is a superadded taste of higher comfort out of God's own hand, as it were a piece of Heaven in the soul, which He sometimes cheers it withal, where He hath first given much love and ardent desires after Himself: they are short of that light, in the fulness whereof we hope to dwell hereafter. But besides that God is most free in that particular, and knows what is fittest for us, the greatest part even of true Christians yet do not so walk, nor attend to that spiritualness that is capable of such visits.

The resurrection of the body.] The comfort of these privileges, is opposed to those grand evils that we feel or fear: sanctification, to the power of sin; justification or forgiveness, to the guilt of sin; the resurrection, to temporal death; and life eternal, to the second or eternal death.

This is the raising of the self-same body that is laid in the dust; otherwise, the giving of a body to the soul again, must have some other name, for *resurrection* it cannot be called.

That God can do this, notwithstanding all imaginable difficulties in it, have we not proof enough in what He hath done? Surely, that which He did not in the beginning of time, the framing of the whole world of nothing, is more han a sufficient pledge of this which is to be done in the end of time.

That he will do it, we have His own word for it, and the pledge of it in raising His Son Jesus; therefore called, *The first begotten from the dead,* Col. i. 18, this as relating to believers, who are one with him. The resurrection of the dead in general, is an act of power: but, to the godly, it is an act of grace, to the wicked of justice. Both shall rise by the power of Christ, but, to the one, as a Judge, and a Judge who shall condemn them; to the other, as their head, and their Saviour. Joseph's two fellow-prisoners were both taken out of the prison,

and at the same time; but the one to the court, the other to the gallows. So shall it be in the resurrection. John v. 29.

The confession of faith being of such things as belong to believers and are their happiness, therefore *their* resurrection is particularly here intended, as we see eternal life and glory is subjoined to it.

Our bodies are raised, which were companions and partakers of our good and evil in our abode upon earth, that they may in eternity be companions and partakers of our reward. Those of the ungodly, to suit their condemned souls, shall be filled with shame, and vileness, and misery; and those that were, in their lower estate here, temples of the Holy Ghost, shall be filled with that fulness of joy that shall run over from the soul unto them: they shall be conformable to the happy and glorious souls to which they shall be united, yea, to the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall then be nothing but beauty, and glory, and immortality, in them which are now frail and mortal, and being dead, do putrefy and turn to dust. *He shall change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his most glorious body.* Phil. iii. 21. But, as St. Bernard says well, If we would be sure of this, that our bodies shall be conformed to his in the glory to come, let us see that our souls be here conformed to his, in that humility which he so much manifested whilst he dwelt among men: if we would that then our vile body be made like his glorious body, let our proud heart now be made like his humble heart.

Life eternal.] Our Confession of faith ends in that which is *the end of our faith,* our everlasting salvation, or eternal life. Of which, all that we can say is but stammering, and all our knowledge and conceiting of it but ignorance, in regard of what it is: yet, so much we know, or may know of it, as, if we knew aright, would certainly draw us more into the desires and pursuit of it. The very name of life is sweet, but then especially as it is here meant, in the purest and sweetest sense, for a truly happy life. *Non est vivere, sed valere, vita.* For a life full of misery is scarcely worth the name of life, and the longer it were, the worse; therefore, the miserable estate of damned souls, though immortal in it, is called *death.* So then, by this *life,* true and full blessedness being meant, and then, that added, that it is *eternal* life, what can be imagined more to make it desirable? So happy, that there shall not be the smallest drop of any evil or bitterness in it, pure unmixed bliss; nothing present in it that is displeasing, nor any thing wanting that is delightful; and *everlasting,* that when millions of years (if there were any such reckoning there) are rolled about, it shall be as far from ending as at the first.

A very little knowledge of this blessed life, would make us clean out of love with the life that now we make such account of. What can it be that ties us here? The known shortness of this life, where it more happy than it is to any, might make it of less esteem with us. But then withal, being so full of miseries and sins, so stuffed with sorrows round about us, and within ourselves, that if the longest of it can be called long, it is only the multitude of miseries in it, than can challenge that name for it. Such a world of bodily diseases, here one's head paining him, another his stomach—*Quam male nobis convenit, nunc de ventre, nunc de capite, &c., hoc contingere solet in alieno habi-*

tantibus [SENECA]: some complaining of this part, some of that, and the same party sometimes of one malady, sometimes of another; what disappointments, and disgraces, and cross encounters of affairs; what personal and what public calamities; and then, sin, the worst of all! And yet, all cannot wean us! We cannot endure to hear nor to think of removing; and the true reason is, unbelief of this eternal life, and the neglect of those ways that lead to it. Be persuaded at length to call in your heart from the foolish chase of vanity, and consider this glorious life that is set before you. Do you think the provision you make for this wretched present life, worth so many hours' daily pains, and give eternal life scarcely half a thought in many hours, possibly not a fixed, serious thought in many days? Surely, if you believe there is such a thing, you cannot but be convinced that it is a most preposterous, unwise course you take, in the expense of your time and pains upon any thing else more than on life eternal. Think what a sad thing it will be, when your soul must remove out of that little cottage wherein it now dwells, not to be bettered by the removal, but thrust out into utter darkness. Whereas, if ye would give up with sin, and embrace Jesus Christ as your joy and your life, in him you would presently be put into a sure, unfailing right to this eternal life. It is a pure life, and purity of life here, is the only way to it. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

AN EXPOSITION

OF

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye.

THE malice and craft of Satan in reference to good actions, works first in attempting wholly to divert us from them; but, if that take not, the next is to pervert their use, and corrupt them so in doing, that they lose their acceptance with God, and we consequently lose the fruit and comfort of them. And as there is no religious exercise that he hath more quarrel at, and owes greater enmity to, than Prayer, being the most constant crosser of his designs, there is none from which he more endeavours to estrange men, either wholly to lay it down, or to frequent cessations; or, if that cannot be, but the light of conscience still calls for somewhat at least that may pass with a man for Prayer, yet, if Satan can get it turned to hypocrisy and formality, he knows he needs not fear it, for so it wants the life of prayer, and remains nothing but a dead carcass, and therefore can neither please the living God, nor hurt him who is its enemy.

Therefore, our Saviour here warns his disciples to avoid, in praying, these two evils, *the vain ostentation of hypocrites*, and *the vain repetition of the Heathen;* not to think it Prayer, to tumble out a multitude of empty words; and upon that, takes occasion to set this matchless copy of prayer, the way of example being the shortest and liveliest way of teaching. These words, which are but the entry, are not to be passed over: there is in them, I. The duty of Prayer supposed. II. The prescribing of this form. First, *Pray*. Secondly, *After this manner*.

I. The use and necessity of Prayer is taken for confessed, as before, ver. 7: *When ye pray*, and *when thou prayest*. And the consideration of this exercise, and of this pattern of it, is with good reason accounted among the most necessary principles of religion. Without it, indeed, all religion withers and languishes. The Law of God is so pure and exact a rule, that we cannot come near the perfection of it, and therefore fall under its curse. When we understand it so, that drives us to the Gospel, to seek salvation there. And the articles of the Gospel, of our Christian faith, are so high and mysterious, that nature cannot aright understand or believe them; and therefore, both Law and Gospel drive us to prayer, to seek of God renewing grace to conform our hearts in some measures to the holy Law of God, and faith to lay hold on Jesus Christ and salvation, in him held forth to us

in the Gospel. Prayer is not taken in its strict grammatical sense, in which the words used for it signify only petition or request; but as comprehending, together with petition, confession and thanksgiving. It may be called briefly and plainly, *a pious invocation of God;* and, as we are not speaking abstractly of prayer, but according to the estate of fallen men, it is very fit to add the express mention of the Mediator, that it is *an invocation of God in the name of Christ;* for it never ascends to God as pleasing incense, but when it passeth through that golden censer, and is perfumed with the sweet odours of his merits and intercession. His entrance into Heaven hath opened up the way for our prayers to come in, and there is no access to the throne of grace, but by *that new and living way*, as the Apostle speaks, Heb. x. 20. But how much better is the frequent practice, than much discourse and business in defining it! Whatsoever is said aright in this, is for the other as its end, as one hath it out of an ancient philosopher, *Inquirimus quid sit virtus, non ut sciamus, sed ut boni efficiamur: We inquire what virtues are, not to know them, but to have them.* And indeed, to do otherwise, is but answerable employment to studying the nature of riches, and talking of them, and remaining poor, possessing none.

It is not needful to stay upon distinguishing Prayer by the different matter of petitions, or things to be requested, which, possibly, some of the different names of prayer in Scripture do signify. This may suffice, that it ought to be of such things as are conformable to the will and promises of God, and desired with a suitable disposition of mind; and therefore I call it a *pious invocation.* It is the highest impudence, to present God with unjust or frivolous desires. *Quæ scire homines nolunt, Deo narrant*, as Seneca speaks; They tell God what they would not have men to know. We ought to reverence the majesty of God, and regard that in our requests. There is a difference betwixt solemn prayer and sudden ejaculations, but it is not a difference in their nature, but only in continuance. The former is here meant. Only this of the other, it is to be wished that it were more known, and more in use with Christians; for it is, no doubt, a very happy means of preserving the heart in a holy temper and constant regard of God in all a man's actions, and is a main point of answering the Apostle's word, *Pray continually.* When in company, and apart, a man useth secret, short motions of the soul to God, that may be very frequent in the day, and at night; whereas men's callings and natural necessities and employments, allow them but some certain parcel of both for solemn prayer. And these frequent looks of the heart to Heaven, exceedingly sweeten and sanctify our other employments, and diffuse somewhat of Heaven through all our actions. Solemn prayer, at fit times, is a visiting of God; but this were a constant walking with Him all the day long, a lodging with Him in the night. *When I awake*, says David, *I am still with Thee.* Psal. cxxxix. 18. And these sudden dartings of the soul Heavenwards, may sometimes have more swiftness and force than larger supplications, having much spirit, as it were, contracted into them; and they would, no doubt, if used, be answered with frequent beams of God's countenance returned to the soul, as it were in exchange. For though whole lifetimes of prayer

are not worthy the least of those, yet, it pleases God thus to keep intercourse with those souls that love Him, and for the ejaculations of their desires to Him, looks back on them, and so they interchange as it were sudden glances of love that answer one another. The Lord is pleased to speak thus Himself, and the souls that know this love understand it, *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one of thine eyes.* Cant. iv. 9. But though such looks and ejaculations will refresh a soul inflamed with the love of God, yet it suffices not: they must have times of larger and more secret converse with their beloved, and particularly in the exercise of solemn, continued prayer; and, if cut short of it at any time, they will miss it as much as a healthful body its accustomed repast.

But it would seem, that, though there may be some reason for confession and thanksgiving, yet, that which hath most peculiarly the name of Prayer—petition, is superfluous: He who knows our wants better than ourselves, and what is fittest to bestow upon us, and forgets not all, what need we put Him in mind, and follow Him with so many suits?

This, indeed, is a strong reason against vain babblings in prayer, and imagining to be heard merely for long continuance and multitude of words; and our Saviour himself doth here use it so, ver. 8; but withal he shews us clearly, that it makes nothing against the exercise of prayer, in that he adds immediately upon these words, *After this manner, therefore, pray ye.*

Although the Lord knows well our wants, and doth according to His own good pleasure, yet, there is for Prayer, 1. *Duty.* 2. *Dignity.* 3. *Utility.*

1. *Duty.* We owe this homage to God, not only to worship Him, but particularly to offer up our supplications, and to acknowledge Him our king and ruler of the whole world, and to testify our dependence upon Him, as the giver of every good gift. It is not because He is unwilling and loth to give, for *He gives liberally, and upbraids none;* yet, says the Apostle there, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it.* Jam. i. 5. So, of all wants, that which thanksgiving doth acknowledge after receipt, supplication doth beforehand; His power, and truth, and goodness, &c. This is His name still, The God who *heareth prayer,* and therefore, this homage is due to Him, *To Him shall all flesh come.* Psal. lxv. 2.

2. *Dignity.* This is the honour of the saints, that they are admitted to so near and frequent converse with the great God, that they do not only expect from Him, but may so frequently speak to Him, of their desires and wants, and may pour out their complaints into His bosom. Abraham is sensible of the greatness of this privilege, by reflecting upon the greatness of his distance. Gen. xviii. 27. *Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.* It is an unspeakable honour for dust and ashes to be received into such familiarity with the Lord of heaven and earth.

3. *Utility.* [1.] It quiets and eases the heart when it is troubled, to vent itself to God. As there is some natural ease in sighs and tears, (for otherwise nature should not have been furnished with them, nor teach us to use them,) they discharge some part of grief, though

addressed no whither, but only let out; but more when it is in the presence of some entire friend; so, they must be most of all easing, when they are directed to God in prayer. *Cor secrenat et purgat oratio, capaciusque efficit ad excipienda divina munera:* Prayer, says Augustine, calms and purifies the heart, and renders it more capable of the Divine benefits. *Mine eye poureth forth tears unto God,* says Job, Job xvi. 20; and David, *My sighing is not hid from Thee.* Psal. xxxviii. 9. *Cast thy burden on the Lord,* says the Psalmist. Psal. lv. 22. The Lord calls for our burdens, would not have us wrestle with them ourselves, but roll them over on Him. Now, the desires that are breathed forth in prayer, are, as it were, the very unloading of the heart: each request that goes forth, carries out somewhat of the burden with it, and lays it on God. Phil. iv. 6. *Be careful in nothing,* says the Apostle: that were a pleasant life indeed, if it might be; but how shall that be attained? Why, this is the only way, says he, *In all things make your requests known unto God.* Tell Him what are your desires, and leave them there with Him, and so you are sure to be rid of all further disquieting care of them. Try as many ways as you will, there is no other will free you, in difficulties, of all perplexing thoughts, but this, and this will do it.

[2.] In it the graces of the Spirit are exercised, and they gain by that, as all habits do; they are strengthened and increased by acting. Faith, in believing the promises; and that is the very basis of Prayer: it cannot subsist without the support of faith. And hope is raised up and set on tiptoe, ἀποκαραδοκεῖν, to look out for accomplishment. And love, it is that which delights it, to impart its mind to Him on whom it is set, and thus to entertain converse and conference with Him, and all hours seem short to it that are thus spent; and by this it still rises to a higher flame, it is blown and stirred by Prayer. The more the soul converses with God, doubtless the more it loves Him.

And this speaking your desires to God in prayer, makes the heart still more holy, invites it to entertain new desires, but such as it may confidently acquaint God withal.

[3.] In relation to the particular things desired, it not only fits and disposes the heart for receiving them as blessings, but withal, it is a real means of obtainment, by reason of God's own appointment, and of His promise. He hath bound Himself by His promises not to disregard the prayers of His people. *His ear is open to their cry,* says the Psalmist, Psal. xxxiv. 15. And the many instances in Scripture, and the experience of the Church in all ages, bear witness to the truth of these promises. Imminent judgments have been averted, great armies conquered*, and the very course of nature countermanded, the sun arrested, by the power of Prayer. Moses's hands only held up to heaven, routed the Amalekites more than all the swords that were drawn against them.

The goodness of God is expressed in his promises; and these promises encourage prayer; and prayer is answered with performance;

* In Aurelius's time, the legion of the Christians was called Κεραυνοβόλος, the thundering legion.

and thanksgiving returns the performance in praise to God. Psal. l. 15. So, all ends where it began, in Him who is *the Alpha and the Omega*, the Beginning and the End of all things.

If you would be rich in all grace, be much in prayer. Conversing with God assimilates the soul to Him, beautifies it with the beams of His holiness, as Moses's face shined when he returned from the mount. It is prayer, that brings all our supplies from Heaven; as the virtuous woman is said, Prov. xxxi. 14, to be *like the merchant's ships, she bringeth her food from afar*. Prayer draws more grace out of God's hand, and subdues sin and the powers of darkness; it entertains and augments our friendship with God, raiseth the soul from earth, and purifies it wonderfully. Their experience, who have any of this kind, teacheth them, that, as they abate in prayer, all their graces do sensibly weaken. Therefore, when the Apostle hath suited a Christian with his *whole Armour*, he adds this to all, *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*. Eph. vi. 18. For this arms man and his armour both, with the strength and protection of God: *Armatura armaturæ oratio*.

II. The form prescribed: *After this manner*.

They who know any thing of their own wants and poverty, and of the bounty and fulness of God, cannot doubt of the continual usefulness of prayer; and they who are sensible of their own unskilfulness, will acknowledge, that, as prayer is necessary, so there is necessity of a direction how to perform it. The disciples found this in themselves, when they said, *Lord teach us to pray*, as St. Luke hath it, where he records this prayer. And our Saviour here marks the errors of hypocrisy and babbling in prayer, which are so incident to men, and teacheth his disciples, *After this manner, therefore, pray ye*.

As for prescribing forms of prayer in general, to be bound to their continual use in private or in public, is no where practised. Nor is there, I conceive, on the other side, any thing in the word of God, or any solid reason drawn from the word, to condemn their use.

There is, indeed, that inconvenience observable in their much use, and leaning on them, that they easily turn to coldness and formality; and yet, to speak the truth of this, it is rather imputable to our dulness and want of affection in spiritual things, than to the forms of prayer that are used. For whereas some may account it much spiritualness, to despise what they have heard before, and to desire continual variety in prayer, it seems rather to be want of spiritualness that makes that needful, for that we find not our affections lively in that holy exercise, unless they be awaked and stirred by new expressions: whereas the soul that is earnest on the thing itself for itself, panting after the grace of God and the pardon of sin, regards not in what terms it be uttered, whether new or old; yea, though it be in those words it hath heard and uttered a hundred times, yet, still it is new to a spiritual mind. And surely, the desires that do move in that constant way, have more evidence of sincerity and true vigour in them, than those that depend upon new notions and words to move them, and cannot stir without them. It may be, it is no other than a false flash of temporary devotion that arises in a man's heart, which comes by the power of some moving strain of prayer that is new. But when confessions of sin,

and requests of pardon, though in never so low and accustomed terms, carry his heart along with them Heavenwards, it is then more sure, that the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and the sense of the things themselves, the esteem of the blood of Christ and the favour of God, do move the heart, and there is no novelty of words to help it. So then, though the Lord bestows rich gifts upon some of His servants, for His own glory and the good of His Church, yet we should beware, that in fancying continual variety in prayer, there be not more of the flesh than of the spirit, and the head working more than the heart. It is remarkable, that, as they that search those things observe, the words of this prayer are (divers of them) such as come near the words of such petitions as were usual among the Jews, though He in whom was all fulness and wisdom, was not scarce of matter and words; so little was novelty and variety considerable in prayer, in his esteem. Mistake it not; the Spirit of prayer hath not his seat in the invention, but in the affection. In this, many deceive themselves, in that they think the work of this Spirit of prayer to be mainly in furnishing new supplies of thoughts and words: no, it is mainly in exciting the heart anew at times of prayer, to break forth itself in ardent desires to God, whatsoever the words be, whether new or old, yea, possibly without words; and then most powerful when it words it least, but vents in sighs and groans that cannot be expressed. Our Lord understands the language of these perfectly, and likes it best: He knows and approves the meaning of His own Spirit, and looks not to the outward appearance, the shell of words, as men do. Rom. viii. 26, 27.

But, to speak particularly of this form that is above all exception, it is given us as the pattern and model of all our prayers, and the closer they keep to it, the nearer they resemble it, they are the more approveable. It is a wonder, then, how any can scruple the use of this prayer itself. For, if other prayers are to be squared by it, what forbids to use that which is the square, and therefore perfectest? If they be good by conformity to it, itself must be better. The mumbling of it over without understanding and affection, is indeed no other than a gross abuse of it, and taking of the name of God in vain, as all other lifeless prayer is. And this is not only the Popish abuse of it, but too much our own; for when we do not both understand and attentively mind what we say, it is all one to us, though in our own tongue, as if, with them, we said it in an unknown language. It is a foolish, superstitious conceit, to imagine that the rattling over these words is sufficient for prayer; but it is, on the other side, a weak, groundless scruple, to doubt that the use of it, with spiritual affection, is both lawful and commendable.

Οὕτως.] It is a particle both for the *matter* and the *manner* of prayer.

1. *The matter.* This may be our rule, that whatsoever we cannot reduce to some part of this prayer, as contained under it, should be no part of ours. If we take not heed to this, we may abuse the throne of God with undue and unworthy suits, and ask those things that it were a punishment to give us. Therefore, Plato chose well that word, *Give us what is good for us, whether we ask it or not; and what is evil, give us not, though we should desire it.* Not to speak now particularly, we see in the matter of this prayer in general, that spiritual things are to

be the main of all our prayers; and, in things temporal, not to lodge superfluous, inordinate desires, but in a moderate use to seek things necessary.

2. For the *manner*. Observe, [1.] The *order* of this prayer, that the soul put itself in the sight of God, and Him in its own sight, beginning, as here, with due thoughts of the majesty of God, to whom we pray. And this is of very great consequence: but more of this hereafter.

[2.] That the glory of God is wholly preferred to all our own contentment of what kind soever: that is to be the first-born and strength of all our desires; and all that we seek for ourselves, must be in relation to that His glory, directed to it as our highest scope. And because we are naturally full of self-love, and our hearts are carried by it towards our own interest, and will be ready to start aside like deceitful bows, and slip us in our aiming at that mark; therefore, there be three several petitions, all of that strain, to make them steady and fixed towards it, to desire in all things, and above all things, that our God may be glorified.

[3.] *Brevity;* opposed to that babbling which our Saviour reproves and particularly corrects by this form. The fault he lays on the Heathen, not upon the Jews, for they blamed it too, and their doctors spake against it, alleging that place that is very pertinent, Eccl. v. 2, where he argues from our exceeding distance and the greatness of God, because men use not to entertain great persons with long, empty discourses. Know then, before whom thou art in prayer, and have so much respect to the majesty of God, as not to multiply idle repetitions, such as wise men cannot well endure; how much less the all-wise God! Βαττολογία and πολυλογία are here put as one, because the one is the consequent of the other: where there is much speaking, there will be vain speaking and empty repetitions*. *In multitude of words there wanteth not sin,* says Solomon, Prov. x. 19. And we see it, that they who lay a necessity upon themselves of a long continuance and many words in prayer, as if it were otherwise no prayer at all, they fall into this inconvenience of idle repeating; and this is most unbeseeming our access to the majesty of God, as if there were some defect either in His knowledge, or in His attention or affection to those that seek Him. Therefore, though this was the common fault of the Heathen, yet some even of them had so much discerning as to condemn this folly, and inveigh against it, acknowledging both the wisdom of God, and His love to mankind, and that He understands far better what is fit for us, than we ourselves, and therefore was not to be dishonoured with idle tediousness in prayer†.

But is, then, all length and much continuance in prayer, and all redoubling of the same request, reprovable? Surely not. Were there nothing else to persuade us of this, our Saviour's own practice were sufficient, who prescribed this rule, and yet is found to have spent whole nights in prayer, and to have iterated the same request; and doubtless, (which can be said of no other,) his example is as perfect a rule as his doctrine.

* Χωρὶς τὸ σ' εἶπειν πόλλα καὶ τὸ καιρία. Sophocles.

† *Paucis verbis rem divinam facito.*

This, then, briefly, is the fault here: when the long continuance and much repetition in prayer, is affected as a thing of itself available; when heaping on words, and beating often over the same words, though the heart bear them not company, is judged to be prayer; and generally, whensoever the tongue outruns the affection, then is prayer turned into babbling. Yea, though a man use this very short form here prescribed, yet he may commit this very fault against which it was provided, he may babble in saying it; and it is to be feared, the greatest part do so. Men judge, and that rightly, a speech to be long or short, not so much by the quantity of words, as by the sense; so that a very short speech that is empty of sense, may be called long, and a long one that is full, and hath nothing impertinent, is truly short*: thus, as men judge by the sense of speech, God judgeth by the affection of prayer, which is the true sense of it; so, the quality is the rule of the quantity with Him. There is no prayer too long to Him, provided it be all enlivened with affection: no idle repetition, where the heart says every word over again as often, and more often than the tongue. Therefore, those repetitions in the Psalms, *Lord, hear, Lord, incline Thine ear, Lord attend*, &c., were not idle on this account; God's own Spirit did dictate them, there was not one of them empty, but came from the heart of the holy penmen, full fraught with the vehemency of their affections. And it is reported of St. Augustine, that he prayed over for a whole night, *Noverim te, Domine, noverim me:* because his heart still followed the suit, all of it was prayer. So that in truth, where the matter is new, and the words still diverse and very rich in sense, yet, with God, it may be idle multiplying of words, because the heart stays behind; and where the same words are repeated, so that a man seems poor and mean in the gift of prayer to others, yet, if it be not defect of affection, but the abundance of it, as it may be, that moves often the same request, it is not empty, but full of that sense that the Searcher of hearts alone can read. I had rather share with that *publican* in his own words, and say it often over, as if I had nothing else to say, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, saying it with such a heart, than the most excellent prayer where the outside is the better half.

So, then, this is the mistake of men, to think to make words pass for prayer with God, and to make up what is wanting inwardly, with multitude of words and long continuance: a foolish compensation, that will no way satisfy Him who says, Above all, *my son, give me thy heart;* and no length nor words can supply the want of that with Him. Yet, many do thus; they give large measure of that which is altogether worth nothing. As the orator said of those that make a poor speech pass for something, by crying it out with a loud voice, *that they were like to those cripples who got a horseback to hide their halting;* it is thus here. And the Church of Rome hath it for their common shift; they have shut out the heart out of this employment, where it hath most interest, by praying in an unknown tongue; and this defect they make up with long continuance, and repetition of *pater-nosters*, with a

* *Absit ut multiloquium deputem, quando necessaria dicuntur, quantûlibet sermonum multitudine ac prolixitate dicantur. Brevitas est etiam in longissimâ oratione, cui nihil inest alieni.*

devotion as cold and dead as the beads they drop. And so they with their breviaries, notwithstanding their name, fall directly into this foolish, heathenish vanity of idle length and repetitions.

Thus do we too, though we speak our own known language, when either in secret or in public we suffer our hearts to rove in prayer, and hear not ourselves what we are praying: how then can we expect that God should hear us?

If the affection can be brought to continue in it, prayer in secret cannot be too long. But let us not think it virtue enough that it is long; let it rather be brief with strong bent of mind, than long without it*; as a small body strong and full of spirits, is much better than the greatest bulk that is dull and spiritless. And when we pray in company, because 'men cannot know the temper of other men's hearts, usually a convenient medium betwixt the extremes of briefness and length, seems most suitable.

But, alas! how few be there who keep constant watch over their affections in prayer, and endeavour to keep the heart bent to it throughout! Oh, how much sin is committed by us this way that we observe not!

This is a great lesson, and requires still our diligence, even all our lifetime, to learn it better and better, how to pray.

We have here indeed a complete copy, but we cannot follow it. He who set it us, must put His Spirit within us, to lead our hand and heart that we may follow it, as he here shows how we should pray. We are not born with this heart: *fimus oratores.* And I may add the other word, true of us, in regard of our vanity of mind and the devices that arise in it: *nascimur poetæ. Omnis fictio cordis,* Every *fiction* of the heart, &c., Gen. vi. 5. We must have that Spirit of His, the Spirit of prayer, to teach us effectually, and make us learn this Divine art of prayer, according to His rules. Although we are thus externally taught by our Saviour's doctrine, yet, unless we be taught within by the Spirit, we are never the nearer; we know neither what to ask, nor how to ask. But that is a happy supply, and they may rejoice in it who have it, the Spirit of God *helping their infirmities, and making intercession for them.* Rom. viii. 26. How should they but speed in their suits with God, who hath both His own Spirit interceding, by framing and inditing their petitions, and His own Son interceding at His right hand by his merits!

He that follows me, says our Saviour, *shall not walk in darkness.* John viii. 12. It is safest, in all our ways to be led by him, particularly in our access to the Father by prayer. He leads us in by his intercession. *Through him we have* [προσαγωγήν,] *access,* or rather, *adduction.* Eph. ii. 18. He takes us by the hand to bring us to the throne of grace, gives us his Spirit to frame our minds, and teach us with what disposition to pray. Here he leads us, by putting words in our mouths, and furnishing us what to say. Consider,

I. The preface, or compellation. II. The petitions. III. The conclusion.

* *Non est (ut quidam putant) orare in multiloquio, si diutius oretur, aliud est sermo multus aliud diuturnus affectus. Absit multo loquutio, sed non desit multa precatio.* AUGUSTINE.

By the preface, we are in general taught this, ere we consider particularly the words of it: 1. To endeavour to have right thoughts and apprehensions of God, on whom we call. 2. At our entry or beginning to pray, to set ourselves before Him, and Him before our own sight; to have the eye of our mind set on that Deity we worship. This would do much to the curing of that common disease of our prayers, the wandering and roving of our minds; an evil that they cannot but be sensible of, and often bewail, who take any notice of their own inward carriage with God, who trace their own hearts, and ask account of their behaviour in prayer*. Oh, light inconstant hearts! may they say: as the Latin reads that, Psal. xl. 12, *Cor meum dereliquit me.* How many regard them not at all! But they who do, find it their ordinary trick to give them the slip. And this is one great cause of our wanderings, that we do not, at our entrance to prayer, compose ourselves to due thoughts of God, and set ourselves in His presence: this would do much to awe us, and ballast our minds, that they tumble not to and fro, as is their custom. There be not many that do, but it would prove no doubt much help, would we task ourselves to this, never to open our mouths to God, till the eye of our soul were fixed upon Him, and taken up with the considering of His presence. But of this more when we come to those words, *Who art in Heaven.*

Our Father which art in Heaven.] *Our Father*—the mercy of God is in this, to beget in us the confidence of faith; in the other, *Which art in Heaven*, the majesty of God to work us to reverence: though there is somewhat in the word *Father*, likewise, to persuade reverence, and something in the other that confirms faith; (but more of this hereafter;) yet, if we take that which appears most, and is predominant, the former mainly supports faith, and the latter begets humility.

The frame of it is extensive; not, *My Father*, but *Our Father*, and so throughout. Besides that it was a pattern both for public and private prayer, and so it was fittest to run in the larger and public style, it doth, no doubt, as all have taken it, teach the charitable extension of our prayers, where they are most private, to take in with our own the good of others, and when we are busiest and most particularly dealing for ourselves, yet, not to shut out our brethren. Let the place and performance of secret prayer be as private as may be, but the strain and supplications public, as well as personal. The most private prayer of the godly is a public good, and he loses nothing by that; for, besides that his particular interest is not hindered by taking in others, he hath this gain, that by the same reason he likewise hath a share in all the prayers of others. And this (though little considered by the most) is one point, and not a small one, but a very profitable and comfortable point of that article of our faith. *The communion of saints*, that every believer hath a share in all the prayers of all the rest: he is partner in every ship of that kind that sets to sea, and hath a portion of all their gainful voyages.

But he that in prayer minds none but himself, doubtless he is not right in minding himself. Howsoever, this he may be sure of, that in keeping out others from his prayers, he bars himself from the benefit

* Nihil est in nobis corde fugacius. GREGORY.

of all others' prayers likewise. *Si pro te solo oras, pro te solus oras:* If thou prayest for thyself alone, thou alone prayest for thyself, says St. Ambrose. So that self-love itself may here plead for love to our brethren. Forget not the Church of God, and to seek the good of Zion, it is not only your duty, but your benefit. Are you not all concerned in it, if indeed you be parts of that mystical body? And it hinders not at all, but rather advances your personal suits at God's hands, when He sees your love to your brethren, and desires for the Church's good. Let not, therefore, any estate, no private perplexity or distress, nor very sorrow for sin, take you so up, as to be all for yourselves: let others, but especially the public condition of the Church of God, find room with you. We find it thus with David; when he was lamenting his own case, Psal. li. 18, and Psal. xxv. ult., and elsewhere, yet, he forgets not the Church: *In Thy good pleasure do good to Zion, and build up the walls of Jerusalem.* So then, let this be the constant tenor of your prayers, even in secret. When thou prayest alone, *shut thy door*, says our Saviour here, shut out as much as thou canst the sight and notice of others, but shut not out the interest and good of others; say, *Our Father:* as the heathen call their God, Ζεῦ Πάτερ.

Father.] He is indeed our Father (Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν. Acts xvii. 28,) as the author of our being, beyond all the visible creatures. He breathed upon man *the breath of life.* But the privilege of this our natural relation, the sin of our nature hath made fruitless and comfortless to us, till we be restored by grace, and made partakers of a new sonship: we are indeed the workmanship of God, but, being defaced by sin, and considered in that estate, our true name is, *children of wrath.*

But the sonship that emboldens us to draw near unto God as our Father, is derived from His only begotten Son. He became the son of man, to make us anew the sons of God. Being thus restored, we may indeed look back upon our creation, and draw out of it, to use in prayer with God, that we are His creatures, the workmanship of His hands, and He in that sense *our Father.* But, by reason of our rebellion, this argument is not strong enough alone, but must be supported with this other, as the main ground of our comfort, that wherein the strength of our confidence lies, that He is *our Father* in His son, Christ; that by faith we are invested into a new sonship, and by virtue of that may call Him *Father*, and move Him by that name to help and answer us. John i. 12. *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God.* Our adoption holds in Jesus Christ as the head of this fraternity; therefore he says, *I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* John xx. 17. He says not, To our Father and our God, but severally, *mine* and *yours;* teaching us the order of the new covenant, that the sonship of Jesus Christ is not only more eminent in nature, but in order, is the spring and cause of ours, as St. Cyril well observes. So then, he that here puts this word in our mouths, to call God, *Father*, he it is by whom we have this dignity and comfort that we call him so.

But this adoption is accompanied (that we think it not a naked, external name) with a real change, and so great a change, that it bears

the name of that which is the real ground of sonship; it is called *regeneration*. And these are inseparable. There be no sons of God, by *adoption*, but such as are withal his sons by *regeneration* and *new birth*. There is a new life breathed into them from God. He is not only the *Father of Spirits*, by their first infusion into the body, and enlivening it by them, but by this new infusion of grace into the souls of men, (as it seems to signify there, Heb. xii. 9, where he is speaking of spiritual sons,) and enlivening them by it, which were dead without it, as the body is without them. And the Spirit of God renewing them, is the *Spirit of adoption, by which they cry, Abba Father*. Rom. viii. 15. He gives them a supernatural life by this Spirit sent into their hearts; and the Spirit, by that regeneration which he works, ascertains them of that adoption which is in Christ Jesus; and in the persuasion of both, they call upon God as their Father.

So then, you who would have this confidence in approaching to God, to call Him Father, lay hold on Jesus Christ, as the fountain of sonship. Offer not to come unto God, but through *him*, and rest not satisfied with yourselves, nor your prayers, till you find some evidence that you are in *him*. And know, that there is no evidence of your portion in the Son, but by the Spirit; therefore called the *Spirit of the Son, by which we call God Father*. Gal. iv. 6. See whether the Spirit of God dwells and rules in your hearts. For *they that have not the Spirit of God, are none of his*, says the Apostle; but, in the same chapter, he assures you, that *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are* undoubtedly *the sons of God*, Rom. viii. 9, 14. If you then call on the name of God, and particularly by this name, *Our Father*, depart from iniquity. Be ashamed to pretend to be His sons, and yet be so unlike Him, wallowing in sin: it cannot be, that the sons of so holy a God can be altogether unholy, and delight to be so: no, though they cannot be perfectly free from impurity, yet, they who are indeed his children, do certainly hate impurity, because he hates it.

Do you draw near unto God in His Son Christ? Do you give yourselves up to be *led by His Spirit?* Then you may account and call Him *your Father*. And if you may use this word, there is abundance of sweetness in it: it is a spring of comfort that cannot run dry. And it hath influence into all the petitions; as likewise the other word, *Which art in Heaven;* Thou who art so great and so good. Whose name and whose kingdom should we desire to be advanced so much as our own Father's, our Heavenly Father? And whose will to be obeyed on earth as it is in heaven? Of whom should we seek our daily bread, but of our Father? And especially, so rich a Father, possessor of heaven and earth! And forgiveness we may ask of our gracious Father, and conduct, and protection. In the hardest condition that can befall you, ye may come to your Father: all the world cannot bar your access. And there is no child may go to his father with any suit, with more confidence than you may to your Father; and if there be mercy and power enough in God, thou canst not miss of help. He hath the bowels of a Father. Psal. ciii. 13. Yea, says our Saviour, *Can you that are evil give your children good things? How much more will your Heavenly Father give good things to them who ask Him!* Matt. vii. 11. The love of parents to their children, they have from Him:

He hath given it to nature, so, it is but a drop to the ocean of fatherly love that is in himself. *Ante petitionem magnum accepimus, ut possimus dicere, pater: quid enim jam non det filiis petentibus pater, qui jam hoc ipsum dedit ut essent filii?* [Augustine.] Let not, then, unworthiness scare His children. Parents love their children, and do them good, not because they see they are more worthy than others, for it may be far otherwise, but because they are their own.

Yea, though we have run astray from Him, and forgotten very far the duty of children, yet He cannot forget the love of a Father; and our best is, to return to Him. It cannot be well with us, so long as we go any whither else. The prodigal found it so, and therefore, though he was convinced of that, that he was *unworthy to be called his son*, yet he resolves to return, *I will go to my father*. Yea, though to thy sense He should seem to reject thee, yet, let not go this hold. If thou hast but a desire to believe in Him and love Him, though thou canst find no more, and even while thou doubtest whether He is thy Father or no, yet, press Him with the name, call Him *Father*, speak to him as thy Father; Jesus, His Son, in whom he is *well pleased*, doth warrant thee. *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him*, says Job: so resolve thou, though thou sawest His hand, as it were, ready to throw thee into hell, yet, cry to Him still, and use this very name, *Father, reject me not*. Never any perished with such a purpose.

Who art in Heaven.]

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling, Psal. ii. 11. This compellation taken together, and rightly understood, works that due temper of prayer, the mixture of these two, *joy* and *fear*, *confidence* and *reverence*. There was some such thing spoken of Augustus, but it is most true of the Divine Majesty, that they who dare speak rashly to Him, know not His greatness, and they who dare not speak to Him, provided it be with due reverence and respect, know not His goodness.

That we all invoke one Father, teaches that new law of love to one another, which our Saviour, the author of this prayer, so often recommends, and makes the very badge of his disciples. It serves to comfort the meanest, and to abate the loftiness of the greatest who pray thus, as St. Augustine well observes, that they all meet and agree in this: the greatest kings, and their meanest subjects, all must speak to God as their Father, not only all alike having their being from Him as *the Father of the spirits of all flesh*, but the same adoption belonging unto all, high and low, that are believers. All the pomp and command and pleasures of princes cannot make them happy without this grace of adoption; and no outward baseness prejudges any, but they may be happy by partaking of it. In this, likewise, is very clear our lesson of love to God, because our Father. For though (as they say) love doth descend much more than it ascends, and it is here most of all verified, yet it doth ascend from the children to their parents by way of reflection, especially from the sons of God to Him as a Father, who is Love itself. And as this name draws the soul to the throne of grace with assured expectation of mercy, so it commands withal, (as we said,) honour and reverence; especially, being accompanied with this other word that mainly enforces that [ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς,] *In the*

heavens; answering the Hebrew word, which is plural, and signifying that the glorious God is above all the visible heavens. And thus the profane authors speak of God likewise, *ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίων.*

We know, although we are guilty of much forgetting it, that the Lord is every where present, neither excluded nor included any where; that he fills all places, not as contained in them, but as containing them, and upholding them, and all things in them. But He is *in Heaven* after a special manner, in the brightest manifestation of Himself, and as the purest service is performed to Him there. They cannot contain Him, as Solomon expresses it, 1 Kings viii. 27; yet, His throne is there, there He dwells, as in His principal palace, in greatest majesty, as David teacheth us, Psal. xi. 4, and often elsewhere. But that he is not shut up there, and regardless of things below, we learn in that same place; for he adds, *His eyes behold, and His eye-lids try the children of men.*

This is added, first, for *distinction.* As the Apostle differencing Him from the fathers of our flesh, Heb. xii. 9, calls him, *The Father of Spirits,* so here to distinguish Him from earthly fathers, He is styled, *Our Heavenly Father.*

Observe. We cannot here know God according to what He is in Himself, and therefore He is described to our capacity, and to our profit, so as we are able, and as it most concerns us to know Him here, by His gracious relation to us as *our Father,* and by the excellency of His dwelling, as a sign of His greatness, that He is *in Heaven;* both which are extrinsical to his essence. But thus we may learn thus much, to worship and love Him, as the best and the greatest, infinitely exceeding all that we can conceive of Him.

As it is for *distinction,* so, it is such a word of difference as is of excellent use.

1. To make the soul humble and reverend in approaching to God in prayer. If we consider it, shall we not be wary how we behave ourselves in the presence of so great a King? It is very strange, that our souls should not be possessed with the deepest lowliness and self-abasement in the sight of God; worms in the dust before the Majesty that dwells in Heaven. This Solomon expresses: *He is in heaven, and thou on earth, therefore let thy words be few.* What is this we find in ourselves, that makes us so drunk with self-conceit, not only in converse one with another, but with God? Surely, we know Him not; at least, we consider not who He is, and where He dwells, and who we are, and where we dwell. Surely, it would lay us low, if when we come before God, we would consider Him as the most glorious King, sitting on His throne, and compassed with glorious spirits, who offer Him spotless praises, and we ourselves coming before Him, as base frogs creeping out of our pond, where we dwell amidst the mire of sinful pollutions.

Thus, indeed, His highness should humble us in coming, but it should not affright us from coming before Him; for though He is in Heaven and we on earth, yet, He is *our Father.* Thus ought we to join these two, and to behold them jointly, that we may have that right posture of mind by them which suits with prayer—*humble boldness.*

There may be undue distrust, but there cannot be too much humility of spirit, in prayer. The more humble, the fitter to come to God; and He the more willing to come into the soul, and dwell in it. For that is the other house that He hath chosen. They seem very ill suited together: if the highest heavens be the Lord's one dwelling, it would seem fit that the other should be the richest palaces on earth, or stately-built temples. No, the other is such a one as we most despise, but God prefers before all other, even the most sumptuous building. Isa. lvii. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also,* (A strange *also!*) *that is of a broken and humble spirit.* The highest heavens are the habitation of His glory, and the humble heart hath the next honour, to be the habitation of His grace.

2. As the word humbles the soul in God's sight, so it elevates it to heaven where God dwells, and fixes it there in prayer. And this elevation is not contrary to humility: the soul that is laid lowest in itself, is most sublime in converse with God, *Sublimiter humilis et humiliter sublimis.* [Cyprian.] And thus ought our hearts to ascend in prayer, which, alas, we usually suffer to lag and draw the wing heavily on the earth. *Unto thee, O Lord,* says the Psalmist, *do I lift up my soul.* Psal. xxv. 1. That is the right and natural motion of prayer. But there is another lifting up that our souls are better acquainted with, which is spoken of in the Psalm immediately foregoing, the *lifting up of the soul unto vanity:* and the more so lift up, the further off from God. O the vainness of our hearts! And how hard is it to establish them on Him who dwells on high! Even while we are speaking to Him, we suffer them to break loose and rove, and to entertain foolish thoughts. We would not use a king or great person so, nor any man whom we respect, when we are speaking to him seriously, to intermix impertinences, and forget what we are a saying. But we dare offer gross nonsense to the all-wise God: though the words go on in good sense, yet the prayer is so to Him, when the heart intermixes vain thoughts—*Polum terræ miscet,* confuses and spoils all. And this is the great task as we have said, to bring the heart before God, to set it on His holy mountain in Heaven, while we pray, (it should be so certainly,) and leave servile, earthly thoughts at the foot of the mount.

3. It gives confidence. [1.] Of the power of God His rich ability to grant all our requests. He, that Lord of all, and as greatest possessor, hath his throne in the highest heavens, and doth what pleaseth Him in heaven and in earth; this, with the other completes our comfort: *good-will,* and *power—Our Father in heaven.* And this we may apply to all our wants, for assurance of supply, and to all our enemies, and the Church's enemies, that our prayer shall be heard for their foil and disappointment. *He sits in Heaven and laughs.* Psal. ii. 4. They rage, and tumult, and consult; a great bustle and noise they keep; and He sits and laughs at them. He scorns all their proud attempts, for that with ease He can scatter them in a moment: one word of His mouth overturns them and all their contrivances.

[2.] It is a confirmation of our portion in Heaven. If He who is in Heaven be *our Father,* then, our inheritance lies there, in that land

of peace where it cannot be lost or impaired, and He will bring His children to the possession of it. To be the sons of God, is not a style without an estate, an empty title. No, He who makes us sons, makes us heirs likewise: *sons*, we are, *in Christ*, and *co-heirs with Christ.* Rom. viii. 17. He came down to earth for this purpose, to make a new purchase of heaven for us; and he is returned thither to prepare it for us. *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also.* John xiv. 2.

Hallowed be Thy name.]

The sense of many wants and necessities, drives a Christian daily to God in prayer; yet, certainly, that which draws him most strongly to it, is of a higher nature, the sense of his duty to God, and the delight he hath to do that homage and honour to Him. And therefore, in prayer, the main current of his heart runs that way, and so agrees with this pattern given us by our Saviour; wherein we see clearly, that our prime desires are to be bestowed on the glory of God. And that is placed first, not only as it is to be preferred before all other suits, but as it is to be regarded still in all the rest, and they all referred to it. And to make the impression of this desire the deeper on our hearts, and to give the fuller vent of it in expression to them who have it, there are, you see, three of these six petitions spent on it. This is the first of them, *Hallowed be Thy name.* This suits well with the style here given to God *Our Father. If I be a Father, where is my honour?* says the Lord by His prophet, Mal. i. 6. And here, His children are taught to join these two together: Thou art *our Father*, and so glorious a Father *dwelling in Heaven;* therefore, our desire is, that Thou mayest have honour, that *Thy name may be hallowed*, and *Thy kingdom come.* We will inquire,

1. What is meant by His name. 2. What is the hallowing or sanctifying of it. 3. What the petition itself is.

1. Briefly, His name is, Himself, as He is made known to us, and conceivable by us, and differenced from all other beings, as men are by their names one from another. For to this purpose are all these several names and attributes given Him, which we find in Scripture, that we may so conceive of Himself as here we are capable.

2. To sanctify his Name, we know, cannot be to infuse holiness into it, or effectually to make it holy; for neither can we so make any thing holy, nor can the name of God be so made holy, for it is most holy of itself, yea, He is holiness itself, and the fountain of all holiness. But according to the double sense of the word *blessing* as mutual betwixt God and man, so is this of *sanctifying. Blessed*, says the Apostle, *be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.* Eph. i. 3. His *benedicere*, is *benefacere.* He blesseth us really, as the giver of all blessings and of blessedness itself; and our blessing Him is no other than the acknowledging of this, that it is He who blesseth us, and praising Him for it. Thus He sanctifies us, makes us holy, purifies us by His Spirit from our natural unholiness and filthiness according to His promise, (Ezek. xxxvi. 25) and according to our Saviour's prayer (John xvii. 17); and we sanctify the Lord and his name, (as here, and Isaiah viii. 13,) when we know and acknowledge that He is holy, and use His name holily. And

thus, they only sanctify, who affectionately pray thus, that His name may be sanctified, whose hearts he hath first sanctified and made them holy.

More particularly and distinctly, the sanctifying of God's name hath in it these things. [1.] To have right thoughts of the holiness and majesty of God. [2.] That, upon so conceiving of Him, our hearts be reverently affected towards Him. [3.] Not only to have that due apprehension and reverence of His holiness in the habit, and so let it lie dead within us, but often to stir up ourselves to the remembrance and consideration of it, to call in our thoughts to act about it: so, this will increase our knowledge and reverence, (as all habits grow by acting,) and will excite the soul to praise Him, as the Psalmist speaks, *Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.* [4.] The declaring and extolling of His holiness, speaking, upon all seasonable occasions, honourably of his name. [5.] The humble sense and acknowledgment of our own unholiness in his presence: and therefore, all those lowly confessions of sins and of their own unworthiness, that we find in the prayers of the prophets, are so many hallowings of the name of God, giving the glory of holiness to Him alone, and taking the shame of their own pollutions. Thus, Dan. ix. Isa. lxiv. &c. As some of the Americans have a custom, when they appear before their king, to put on their worst apparel, that all the magnificence may rest upon him alone, and appear the better; thus, though the majesty of God, in itself being infinite, needs nothing else to commend it, yet, to our apprehension of it, it may be thus, and the saints in desire of His glory may intend this, to set off the lustre of His purity and excellency, in the humble confessions of their own vileness: *To thee, O Lord, belongeth righteousness, but to us confusion of face.* Dan. ix. 7. [6.] The hallowing of God's name, is an earnest endeavour of conformity with Him in holiness; first, in heart, that must be the principal seat of it, and then, holiness in all our words and actions, and the whole course of our lives. This is that which the Lord continually presses upon His people, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Levit. xix. 2; xx. 7; xxi. 8, &c. And this is the most effectual sanctifying of His name by way of declaring it holy, when His people walk in holiness. Though you tell the world that He is holy, they know Him not: they can neither see Him nor His holiness; but when they see that there are men, taken out of the same lump of polluted nature with themselves, and yet so renewed and changed, that they hate the defilements of the world, and do indeed live holily in the midst of a perverse generation; this may convince them that there is a brighter spring of holiness, where it is in fulness, from whence these drops are, that they perceive in men; for seeing it is not in nature, there must be another principle of it, and that can be no other than this holy God. Thus is His name hallowed, and He known to be holy, by the holiness of His people.

So then, the petition takes in all, and in it we desire the sanctifying and magnifying of God's name in every possible way. 1st, By ourselves, that we may mind His glory, and by His grace sanctify His name. 2dly, By others, that our Lord may be more known and honoured in the world. They would gladly have many hearts and

many tongues brought in to confess the Lord, and His holiness and greatness. Thus the Psalmist stirs up the angels to bless the Lord, Psal. ciii. 20; not that they need exciting, but to shew his own affection to God's praises. 3dly, And because there is still some alloy and mixture of unholiness in all the hallowing of His name here below, all our services being stained, therefore, as the godly do, in this request, wish all the exalting and sanctifying of God's name among men that is attainable here, so, I conceive, they do as it were applaud those purer services and praises that are given Him above; and sensible how far they fall short themselves, they are glad to think that there be such multitudes of angels and glorified spirits hallowing and praising His name better and more constantly, not ceasing day nor night to cry *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.* And here they follow as they can, and give their acclamation, though in a lower key, yet as loud as they are able, *Even so, Lord, hallowed be Thy name.* Now, the cause and source of their great desire of exalting and hallowing the name of God, is their love to Him, which the sight that He hath given them of His excellency, hath kindled in their hearts.

After that, their chief delight is to think of Him, and speak of His name. Gladly would they have Him highly esteemed by all; and this is their grief, that they can find so few to bear them company and help them in this, in hallowing and extolling His name, which is so deeply engraven on their hearts. See how pathetically the Psalmist repeats that again and again, Psalm cvii. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men!* And when they hear or see any thing tending to the dishonour of His name, this wounds them, and pierces them through as a sword, as the Psalmist speaks, Psal. xlii. 10. They are far from envy, or an evil eye: yea, they rejoice in the gifts and graces which God bestows upon others, although it be beyond what they have themselves; for still it serves their desires, and answers what they are most earnest in: it tends to the hallowing and glorifying of the name of God. And what they have themselves, they are not in danger to grow vain upon it: rather, they wonder at the free grace of God, and extol that, and think with themselves, What am I, that He should have had compassion on me, and plucked me out of the crowd of the lost world, and given me any desire to hallow His name, while others are blaspheming it, and delighting to dishonour it! But ever the more they receive from God, they are the more humble, the more desirous of His praise, and regardless of their own. Any holiness that is in them, they know well, is from Him, and therefore, all the glory of holiness must return thither, from whence holiness originally comes; and the very end for which they desire increase of holiness in themselves, is to the end that they may the more hallow His name from whom they have it, and that, by the increase of their stock, there may be an increase of the tribute of praise to God.

But alas! how far are we from this mind! What hypocrisy is it, for the same mouth to utter this request, that dares profane the name of God by vain swearing! That which is *holy*, as the Hebrew word imports, is *separated* from common use, (although it was not holy before,) and ought not to be profaned; least of all, this name, which is

not made holy by such a separation, but is primitively holy in itself; and they who use it rashly and unholily, are deeply guilty of despising the majesty of God. It is not possible that any one who is truly sensible of His greatness and holiness, can customarily abuse His name, that blessed name which he hopes to bless for ever. You say, It is your custom. It is a wonder to hear men speak thus as an excuse; it is the deepest accusation. Are not men known by their customs? Do not these discover what they are? It is your custom,—what gain you by that? You must confess that it is such a one as is the custom of the children of Satan, the professed enemy of God's name; as the delight and custom of hallowing His name, is the badge of His children. It is your custom! Then know, it is His custom not to acquit them, but to make them feel the weight of his punishing hand, who dare make it a custom to dishonour his name.

Again, they who profane His holy day, they who sanctify not His name by calling on it daily in private, and generally, all who by an unsanctified life do blot the profession of Christians, what do they mean to lie so grossly, not unto men, but unto God, to His face, in praying thus, as if they desired the hallowing of His name by all, and yet, do nothing but unhallow it themselves? Think it not sufficient to the hallowing of His name, that His house and worship is purged of abuses: though they be holy, yet, unless we ourselves be holy too, we pollute all in our use of them; the worships, and sabbaths, and the name of God, our filthy hands defile all. Let us not thus provoke God, lest in just wrath and punishment, He sanctify His own name upon us, which we profane, as He threatens against the Jews by His prophets. Ezek. xxxvi. 23.

First, then, be not satisfied to think slightly and superficially of God. Take time to consider Him, and know who He is; and then you will reverence Him in your thoughts. It deserves and requires all the whole heart to keep up with it; and alas! what is a heart, a narrow thing, though the largest of hearts, as Solomon's, *as large as the sand of the sea*, to an infinite God! We can find time for our earthly thoughts, and for vain, foolish thoughts, which are good for nothing; and shall we shut out God, or think any sudden passing look enough for Him!

Secondly, Behave yourselves with regard of Him in His worship: ἁγια ἁγίως, let holy things be done holily.

Thirdly, Honour it in your lives; especially, such as do know His name, grow daily more respective and tender of it, and be more circumspect in your actions, and, *as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* 1 Pet. i. 15.

Thy kingdom come.] He who is the beginning of all things, must likewise of necessity be the end of them all; and then are our intentions rightest and purest, when we are most possessed with the desire of that highest end, the glory of God, and look straightest unto it. And if this purpose ought to diffuse itself through all our actions, certainly, in prayer, it should be most lively and active, because prayer is so direct and express a turning of the face of the soul unto God, and setting of its eye upon Him. Therefore, this petition follows forth the same desire with the former, wishing honour to God. He is a

most holy God, and the former request was for His glory in *that*, in the *sanctifying of His name*. He is a king, a great king, the greatest of all, and *this* wishes His glory in that sense, that His *kingdom* may be advanced: *Thy kingdom come*. 1. We shall inquire what His kingdom is. 2. What is the coming of it. And, 3. Shall speak of the petition itself.

1. This *kingdom* is not His universal supremacy over all the world and all the creatures in it, as being their Maker and their Preserver, and so having the highest and justest title, and the most absolute kind of dominion over all things; but His peculiar royalty over His Church. By the former, He is called *King of Nations;* Jer. x. 7; and by the latter His style is *King of Saints*, Rev. xv. 3. Of the former the Psalmist speaks, Psalm xxiv. 1, but that which he adds, ver. 3, concerns the latter, and so on, in the Psalm, and ver. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of Glory may come in.*

This kingdom is gathered and selected out of the other, and though the less in quantity, yet, in God's account, far more precious than all the rest. The Church is the jewel in the ring of the world: in it He hath His peculiar residence and chief delight; as kings choose one of their palaces, and, if they have more, one of their kingdoms, to dwell in more than another. Those things that are hidden from the rest of the world concerning this King, are made known to His subjects of this His select kingdom; and it is in it that He opens up, displays after a special manner more than in all the world besides, both the glory of His majesty, and the riches of His bounty, *here*, in part, and fully *hereafter*. And according to that difference, it is distinguished into the kingdom of *grace*, and that of *glory*.

The kingdom of *grace* is to be considered, First, In the external means and administration of it; Secondly, In its inward being and power. In the former sense, it is of a larger extent; but in the latter, of a more uniform nature in itself, and more conformed to its Head. The former, the kingdom of grace in its outward administration, is plainly the whole visible Church; but the inward power of the kingdom of grace is only in the hearts of those who are truly sanctified, and members of the invisible Church.

Jesus Christ is ordained and anointed the king and head of both, political; but of the one, natural, and therefore altogether indissoluble, not only in regard of the whole, but of each part and member of it.

The visible Church is but a little parcel, a kingdom chosen out of the world; but the truly godly, who are alone the subjects of the inward kingdom of grace, are but a small part of that part, a choice part of the visible Church, as *it* is a choice part of the visible world.

Now these three, the kingdom of glory, and those two kinds of the kingdom of grace, stand in this subordination: the inward kingdom of grace is the way and preparation for that of glory, and the outward kingdom of grace in the visible Church, is the means and way of introducing, and establishing, and increasing the inward: so that both of them look forward to the kingdom of glory, as their utmost end, and shall terminate and end in it.

The first of these, the external or political kingdom of Christ in the

visible Church, consists in his absolute and supreme authority to appoint the laws of his Church, and rulers by these laws. And the use of the word, and sacraments, and discipline, according to his own appointment, is the acknowledgment of him as King of his Church.

The other, the inward kingdom of grace, is then received into the heart, when the Spirit of God moves it to a willing subjection to Jesus Christ, and the whole soul submits itself to be governed by him. He enters indeed by conquest, and yet, is most gladly received. It is both a lawful and a favourable conquest, because he frees the soul, which is his by so many rights, from the tyranny of a most cruel usurper, the Prince of darkness, and brings in a kingdom full of sweetness and happiness: there is no worse in it than these, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. xiv. 17.

This is the folly of an unbelieving mind, that it entertains most false prejudices against the kingdom of Christ; thinks that, if it let him in, it shall be controlled and curbed, and therefore resolves against it, and studies how to hold him out; *consults* (as it is in the second Psalm) *against the Lord and His anointed.* But this is a lamentable madness, to dream of liberty in the midst of chains, and to be afraid of a deliverer. There is no soul that opens to this King of glory, but can testify that it never knew what true liberty was, till it admitted this kingdom of God, till there was a throne for Christ erected within it.

The third, the kingdom of *glory*—would you hear wherein that consists? It is such as we cannot hear nor speak of as it is. And this indeed says more of it than all we can say, that the excellency of it is unspeakable, yea, unconceivable. This we are sure of, to speak comparatively of it, (which is our help in things we understand not in themselves,) that all the kingdoms of the world unite all their glory together, are base and poor in respect of it, but *splendida in serico;* and that all the delights we have here, not only of nature, but even of grace, are less to it than the smallest sparkle is to the sun in its brightness. All that is done here by our king, Christ, in the ruling of his Church, and the power of his ordinances, and the bestowing of graces on his own, are but preludes and preparations for that; and when that cometh, this way of ruling his Church and people shall cease, as having attained its end. Christ shall *deliver up the kingdom to the Father;* word and sacraments, and discipline, shall be at an end; and then *God shall be all in all.* 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

2. The coming of the kingdom of God, in the former two, is, the extending and spreading of them to those places and persons that have not yet received them, and the increase of their power where they are entertained; for they come gradually. And that kingdom of glory, as it is concerned in the other, comes forward in them so far, and hastens towards its perfection; but in itself, as their consummation, it shall come at once altogether in the end of time.

3. So then, in the petition, all these are included, and in their largest extent; for it is to take it too narrow and too low, to restrain it only to our own interest in this kingdom, either of grace or glory, or both. Thus David, Psal. ciii. excites all to praise the Lord, but most his own soul; begins with that, and ends with it. Although they who desire

it aright, do desire that they may partake of it, (for, if they desire that God may be glorified, they cannot but, even out of love to that glory, besides their own happiness, desire that they themselves may be among those who may honour God as the subjects of His kingdom,) yet they stay not there, but dilate their hearts to wish the advancement and accomplishment of His kingdom in all the elect, and in all those ways that tend to it; and their love may rise to that high strain, as without considering their own interest at all; yea, supposing that they were to be shut out of His kingdom themselves, yet still to wish, *Thy kingdom come:* Let others enjoy and bless Thee, Lord, for ever, even though I should be excluded: let Thine elect be gathered, though I were none of them. Be thou great, O Lord, whatsoever become of me.

[1.] Considering what a height of glory will arise to God out of the final subduing of His enemies, and the full deliverance of His Church, and the bringing home of all His children after all their sufferings and sorrows, to sit down together to that great marriage-supper of the Lamb; they cannot but thus breathe forth their longings and wishes, that that time may be hastened, and the fulness of their Lord's kingdom accomplished, where it shall abide for all eternity.

[2.] Both in relation to that end, and likewise in respect of the present glory that redounds to God in it, they earnestly desire the advancement and enlargement of Christ's kingdom here on earth. For, besides that thus it is rising to its perfection, it is no small present glory to our king, Christ, as a testimony of his invincible power, that he *rules in the very midst of his enemies*, and in despite of them all, Psal. cx. 2; not only sits sure and keeps his own, thrust at him who will, but, when he pleases, gains upon them, and enlarges his territories, and grows greater by their resistances and oppositions. He is here, as David was, often assaulted, and put to defend his kingdom often in war, but always a conqueror; but after this militant kingdom, he shall be as Solomon, who likewise typified him, reigning in perfect peace.

Now, because the enemies of his kingdom are not yet, as they shall be, all *under his feet*, but round about him, and incessantly plotting and working against him, and Satan hath his kingdom and his throne in the world opposite to Christ, therefore, this is one chief point of this request; That all adverse power may be brought low, that all his enemies may lick the dust, and melt before him as wax before the fire. And for us, especially, in these times, That that kingdom of Antichrist, the *Son of perdition*, may, answerably to that his name, be brought to perdition; That God would remember his promise; (for the faithful are called His remembrancers; though He forgets not, and hath His set time for judgment, yet He loves to be stirred up by the cries of His children;) That He would make good at length those words He hath spoken of Babel's ruin and the flourishing estate of His Church in these latter times; That the power of the word, and purity of religion, maugre all the policy and power of men opposing it, may spread and extend itself, and make irresistible progress, as the sun in his course; That Jesus Christ may be daily taking further possession of the nations, even to the ends of the earth, according to the patent of

his Father's donation. And the certainty of its endurance and growth till it be complete, should not abate, but increase the vigour of our prayers for it. And the nearer things are to their accomplishment, the more, usually, the Lord excites the hopes and prayers of His people about them, and they pray the more earnestly, (see Dan. ix.) moving naturally in it, and therefore, fastest when nearest their place.

Again, we pray in this, That where Christ doth reign in his outward ordinances, there he would bring in his spiritual kingdom into the souls of men, that *sinners may be converted unto him.* The love of the glory of Jesus Christ will desire this earnestly, that many hearts may be brought in to submit to him; for the glory of a King is in the multitude of his subjects. Further, That they who are his people, may grow more conformable to his laws; that his dominion may be more powerful in their hearts and lives, and particularly that we ourselves may find it so.

You who will not receive the kingdom of God within yourselves, to what purpose do you speak this, as if you desired it to be enlarged and flourish abroad? 1. You can have no comfort in it, remaining slaves to sin, and so enemies indeed to it. Neither the kingdom of Christ in the government of the Church on the one side, nor on the other, the coming of his kingdom of glory, can do you any benefit, while the third is wanting, the inward kingdom of his grace, which is the true end of the former, and the means to partake of the happiness of the latter. Why wish you *the day of the Lord?* Amos v. 18. As the Prophet says of that day he there speaks of, mistake it not: though that day of his kingdom shall be all glory in itself, it shall be to you, remaining still impenitent, *darkness and not light*, full of horror and amazement. 2. As you can have no comfort in his kingdom, so you cannot really wish its advancement. You wish it well elsewhere, as if you were content it should be any where, rather than within yourselves. But would you indeed have his kingdom to be embraced and advanced, then do, for one, let him be *thy* king: first, give him thine own heart, and then wish him many more; for then thou wilt wish it heartily and truly.

You who have received this kingdom, yet have need still, even in that sense, to wish the coming of it in further degrees and fuller efficacy. Find you not many rebels yet unsubdued? No doubt, they who search and know their own hearts, will, and often do, complain of them to their king: Oh, such swarms of lusts, and unruly, irregular desires! When shall they all be brought into subjection? And so they lift up their wish, from this to the other, the full and glorious kingdom, and say again and again, *Thy kingdom come.* This is the noble desire that takes up the hearts of the godly. While others are desiring and pursuing low, base things, *their* minds, and *their* endeavour, to their power, are chiefly set upon this, the advancement of the kingdom of God. They seek not themselves and their own things, with the world, to the prejudice of this kingdom; no, they desire to lose anything, to suffer contempts and abasements themselves, so that this kingdom may flourish. St. Paul cares not what he be accounted, *modo magnificetur Christus*, so that *now also Christ may be magnified*, Phil. i. 20. As faithful ministers of state, (and wise princes choose

such,) who are not making up themselves to their master's disadvantage, but always preferring his honour to their private benefit, feeling his losses and gains more than their own; (as was said of St. Augustine, *Dominicis semper lucris gaudens, et damnis mœrens;*) this is the right temper of the servants and ministers of Jesus Christ, to be all for their Master, willing that their name, and estates, and lives, and all, may make a part of his footstool to step up to his throne; not forced as his enemies to be so, but willingly laying themselves low for his glory. And this comfort they have, that when his kingdom shall come in its fulness, and all his enemies shall be trodden down for ever, then they shall be glorified with him, and shall see his glory with exceeding joy. Therefore do they so often desire his coming, and are so weary of all they see here; and when he says himself, for their assurance and comfort, *Surely, I come quickly*, their earnest desire makes them echo, *Even so come, Lord Jesus.* Rev. xxii. 20.

There is some loss to the flesh, if we will hear it, in this desire, in each kind. The erecting of Christ's kingdom in purity in his Church, thrusts out the outward pomp and magnificence that naturally we like so well. His kingdom of grace cannot be in the soul, without the forsaking of all our accustomed and pleasing ways of sin. But they who know the excellency of his kingdom, are well content to forego all that suits not with it. Thus, that his kingdom of glory may come, the world must be burnt up; and, that we particularly may come to it, we must pass through death. But it is worth all.

Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.]

I will direct my prayer to Thee, says David, Psal. v. 3. The word is, *I will set in order*, or, *orderly address it.* Which implies not the curious contriving either of the words or method, (for there may be most of that, where there is least of this right directing it to God,) but the due ordering of the frame and desires of the heart. And certainly, one main point of that is taught us, as we have said, in the order of this Prayer, in this particular; that it not only prefers the honour of God to all our own interest, setting the heart first upon that, but keeps it to it, causes it to dwell upon that in three several petitions, varying the expression of that one desire, as often as there be several requests following, of our own concernment; teaching us, that that doth, in its own worth, and therefore should likewise in our affection, itself alone being but one, weigh down all the different things besides that we can desire. And thus withal, it is accommodate to our dulness, for that our hearts would not readily, with one word, be either duly stirred up or stretched forth in the heavenly desire; so that, both to excite and to dilate them the more, it is thus iterated without vain tautology. This so short and complete a form, given us by so wise a master, is far from that; yea, it was particularly intended in opposition to that abuse. And not only doth the dignity of the thing itself, and our indisposedness, require this adding of one request to another concerning it, but there is in the petitions themselves, a very profitable difference, though their scope is one: they are as so many several arrows aimed at the same mark. The first, in general, wishes all manner of honour to the *name* of God; and because His name is especially honoured in the advancement, and in the completing of

His spiritual *kingdom*, the second is particular in *that*. And because until that kingdom be completed and brought all together, it lies in two several countries,—there is one part of it already above, which is the appointed place for the perfection and perpetuity of this kingdom; another part here below, but tending thither; this third petition particularly concerns these of this lower region and condition, desiring this, that in obedience to their king, they may be as conformed as is possible, to those above. *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Thy will.] God is most perfectly one, and His will one; yea, His will is Himself, He is *purus actus;* yet, in respect of its several objects or circumstances that concern them, it is diversely distinguished in the schools, sometimes needlessly, yea, erroneously, but some of the distinctions are sound and useful. But here we shall not need them much. His will is here taken, according to a very usual figure, for that which He wills; and we desire here, That we ourselves, and others, may be obedient to His will in every thing, even here on earth: That He may be acknowledged and served, not only in Heaven, but here likewise.

For this, no question, means not the equality of our obedience to theirs, but the quality of it; that, though it fall very far short of so perfect a pattern, yet it may bear some resemblance to it; as a scholar's writing, though it be nothing so good as his copy, yet may have so much likeness as to show he follows it. It doth no wrong, but helps a man much in any thing, the more perfect example he hath before him; although he be not able to match it, yet, the looking on it, makes him do the better: though an archer shoot not so high as he aims, yet the higher he takes his aim, the higher he shoots. And, that we may not think it strange, that we have here the citizens of Heaven set before us as a model for obedience, we have our Heavenly Father Himself propounded by our Saviour in the former chapter, as our example for perfection: *Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*

The obedience in Heaven, is, 1. Universal, without choosing and excepting; and this is, because the will and command of God is the very reason of it. The angels are said to *do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word;* Psal. ciii. 20: they wait but for a word from Him, and that is enough. And in this should we desire to be like them. Though we cannot fully keep any one commandment, yet should we exclude none of them from our endeavour: yea, the rather, because we want that perfection in the degree, should we study this other, which is a kind of perfection in the design and purpose, to *have respect to all the commandments*, as David says: to have our eye upon them all, as the word there is, Psal. cxix. 6. So, Psal. xvi. 8: *I have set the Lord always before me*, [*æqualiter posui,*] in an even, constant regard of His will. And the want of this discovers, that much of our obedience hath not the right stamp on it, is no way *heavenly*.

A man may think he approves and does the will of God in some things, where it is but by accident, because the letter of the commandment is coincident with his own will; and so, it is not the will of God, but his own, that moves him; therefore, in doing that which God commands, he does not God's will, but his own; and therefore, when

they meet not, but are contrary, there it appears, for he leaves God's will then, and follows his own. A covetous father condemns the prodigality of his lavish son, and the son again cries out against the avarice of his niggardly father, and thus both seem to condemn sin; but the truth is, neither do it: it is but two extreme sins fighting together, neither of them regarding the rule that God hath set: it is but their two idols choking each other, as the Heathen set their gods together by the ears. But they who therefore hate sin, because of God's countermand, and love His will for itself, their obedience is more even, and regards the whole will of God, and at all times: for there is that universality too in their obedience, conformable to that of Heaven. *So shall I keep Thy law*, says David, *continually, for ever and ever*. Psal. cxix. 44.

See a man's carriage when tempted or provoked to some sin. For when the occasion is out of reach, and out of sight, what wonder if then he forbears? But when it offers itself, as, by company, intemperance, or cursing or swearing by passion, it appears, if a man yield then, that sin was not out before, but only lay close and quiet within till it was stirred, as mud in the bottom of water. *Natura vexata prodit seipsam.* So, a man may, for his own gain, or his own glory, do God's will. Jehu could say to Jonadab, *Come and see my zeal for the Lord.*

2. The obedience of Heaven is cheerful. It is the very natural motion of glorified spirits, to be acted and moved by the will of God. *They excel in strength*, says the Psalmist, in that ciiid Psalm, *and do His commandments:* they have no other use for all their strength; that is the proper employment of it. Thus, the godly man, in so far as he is renewed, (for in so far he suits with Heaven,) delights himself in the way of God's commandments, takes more pleasure in keeping them, than profane men do in all their pleasures of sin, by which they break them. He is never well but when he is in the way of obedience; and the ways of sin are painful and grievous to him. Then hath he most inward gladness and contentment, when he keepeth closest to his rule. And the reason why he finds the law of God thus pleasant, is, because it is not to him, as to the ungodly, one *without*, driving him violently, but it is *within* him, and therefore moves him sweetly. *I delight to do Thy will, O my God*, Psal. xl. 8, and he adds, *Thy law is within my heart*, or, in the midst of my bowels. So, Psal. lxxxiv. 5: *In whose heart are thy ways:* not only their feet in the ways, but the ways are in their hearts.

3. They do the will of God in Heaven, unanimously and harmoniously; there is neither an evil eye of envy among them, nor a lofty eye of pride, whatsoever degrees there be among them in their stations and employments. Not to be curious in that, nor to obtrude ourselves into things we have not seen, yet, we are sure, the lesser do not envy the greater, nor the greater despise the less; and the reason is, because they are all so wholly taken up and so strongly united in this joint desire of doing the will of God. Thus ought his servants here, each one in his place, and according to that which God hath dispensed to him, the greatest, humbly, and the meanest, contentedly, to mind this, and nothing but this, *to do His will.*

Answerably to the sense of this petition, do godly men, in prayer,

[1.] Vent their regret and grief unto God, that there is so little regard and obedience to His will amongst men, that they see the greatest part *taking pleasure in unrighteousness*, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Thes. ii. 12. Thus David, Psal. cxix. 136: *Rivers of water run down mine eyes because men keep not Thy law.* And as they bewail ungodliness without them, so, especially, the strength of corruption within themselves: they begin there, and express their grief, in the presence of God, that they are so clogged and hampered with sin cleaving fast to them, and crossing their purposes of obedience; saying with the Apostle, *I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind.* Rom. vii. 23. [2.] They declare their desire of redress, both in themselves and others; that their great desire is, that more obedience were given unto God, and particularly, that they had more faculty and strength to serve him. Psal. cxix. 4, 5. [3.] They pray in this, for the effecting of this their desire, that God would incline men's hearts, and particularly their own, to the obedience of His will; (whatsoever vain will-worshippers say, they are indeed in that sense, θελοθρησκοι, make a deity of the will;) not doubting that it is in His hand to do so, and that he hath more power of our hearts than we ourselves have. Otherwise, it were in vain to put these supplications into His hand, if he have no power to answer them, to give them the real answer of performance. *Incline my heart unto Thy law, &c. Turn us, O Lord, &c.* [4.] They do, in this request, offer up their own hearts to God, to be fashioned and moulded to His will. And every godly man, if he had the hearts of all the men in the world in his disposal, he would dispose them the same way, lodge them with his own, and make one sacrifice of all. His own he gives wholly, resigns it up to his Lord, to be as a piece of wax, in God's hand, pliable to what form He will, to do with it what He will, to turn out and banish whatsoever displeases Him, and to make it to His own mind. In a word, this is the desire of a Christian, that his own will may be annihilated, and the will of God placed in its room; that he may have no will but God's; that he may be altogether subject both to God's commanding and His working will, to do what He commands, and to be heartily content with what He does; for both these are in it.

Where He commands any thing, though our own corrupt will grumble at it, and think it hard, we must tread upon it to obey His will, making that the rule of all we do. To this end, we must endeavour to be acquainted with His will, and to know what it is; otherwise we cannot do it. But once knowing it, this is the end of knowing, to do; otherwise, you know, that knowledge will make us the worse for it, the more guilty.

It is a safe and comfortable thing, to walk every step by His direction. The constant regard of that, is, we see, what conforms us to Heaven. It was observable how this will prevailed with Abraham: he was a loving father, it appears, and upon Sarah's private motion, while there was no more, he could not find in his heart to put Ishmael out of doors, who was but *the son of the bond-woman;* but upon God's command, he was ready to put Isaac to death, who was *the son of the promise.* And He who taught us to pray thus, gives us his own example in this: he did the will of his Father indeed, *as it is done in*

Heaven, and he came to the earth for that purpose: *Then, said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God.* And, in that great and most painful part of his work, *Not my will, but thine be done.* For our actions, then, let His word be our guide; and for the events of things, and all that concerns us, let His good pleasure and wise disposing be our will. Let us give up the rudder of our life into His hand, to be steered by Him.

For our actions, is it not better to observe His will, than to be subject to our own corrupt wills, and to Satan's, *led captive at his will?* And, as it is our best, to *do* what pleaseth Him, so, in all His dealings with us, to be pleased with what *He* does; not to think it were better for us to be richer or greater in the world than we are, or to murmur and struggle under affliction. There is nothing to be gained by this. Who hath resisted His will at any time? In all things He doth what He will, whether it like us or not. Our repining hinders not His working at all, but it hinders our own comfort: our wrestling and fretting doth but pain ourselves. If we be His, (as we profess,) then we may be assured He loves us; and if we believe that, and withal believe that He is wiser than we, then we must confess, that whatsoever He doth with us, is better than our own choosing for ourselves could be.

This is the only way of constant quietness and contentment of mind. Who is there outwardly so prosperous, but meets with many things that cross his will? Now, he who hath renounced his own will, and is fixed upon a continual complacency with the good pleasure and providence of God, to will what He wills, and nothing else; every thing that befalls him, he looks upon that side of it as God's will, and so is satisfied: Doth God think this good, and shall I think it evil?

There is a difference of estates, but all coming from the same Hand, (which is Job's consideration,) to embrace and kiss the worst that can come, is our duty. *It is the Lord*, said David, *let Him do what seems good in his eyes.* 2 Sam. x. 12. Thus, Wilt thou have me poor or rich, healthful or sick, esteemed or despised? Wilt Thou that I live, or that I die? I am thine, Thy will be done.

Give us this day our daily bread.] Man is made up of two different principles, a soul derived from heaven, and a body at first moulded out of earth; as Nazianzen expresses it, πνους και χους, the *breath* of God, and the *dust* of the earth, *Ex igneo spiritu, et terreno corpore.* And according to his composition, so is this prayer comprised; being made for his use, it is wisely fitted to his condition.

The greatest part of it is taken up with such desires as are spiritual, and so most suitable to his worthier part, his soul; such as do immediately concern God, and such as properly concern itself. Yet, the body is not wholly shut out: though the meaner part, yet, being a part of man, and the workmanship of God, this one petition is bestowed upon its concernment.

Observe in it briefly, First, The matter, or object of the request. Secondly, The qualification of it. The matter under the name of *bread;* not only bread for all food, as the Hebrews do, but *food*, so named for all other necessaries. By *bread*, as the chief support and staff of man's life, is meant, all needful temporal blessings, food and

raiment, and health and peace, &c., a blessing on the works of our calling, and the seasons of the year, and all our lawful temporal affairs.

Though a godly man looks upon the necessities of this life as a piece of his present captivity, and is often looking beyond it to that purer life he hopes for, yet, in the mean while, he doth, in obedience to God, use these things, and in dependence upon God, he seeks them at God's own hand.

In the request, together with its object, as here we have it, there is, I. Piety. II. Moderation—*Godliness* and *soberness*.

I. *Piety*, in asking our *bread* of God, in asking it in the true notion, by way of *gift*.

Our daily bread. There is a natural cry or voice of our necessity, and that, not only ungodly men, but unreasonable creatures have, the very beasts and fowls, as the cxlviith Psalm hath it, (ver. 9.) *The ravens ask their meat from God.* But this spiritual cry of prayer is the peculiar voice of God's own children. Now, to ask bread, or needful temporal things, at the hands of God, is not only no way incongruous to the piety and spiritual-mindedness of a Christian, and no wrong to the majesty of God, but, on the contrary, it were impiety in man, and an injury to God, not to do so. We have here the warrant of His own command, *Pray thus.* And is it not most reasonable?

1. Seeing these things are necessary for us to receive, and are in the hand of God to bestow, why ought we not to seek them there? Although in His wisdom, He knows what we need, and is in bounty most ready to furnish us, yet, this is the homage we owe to God, to present ourselves and our necessities before Him, and seek our supplies by prayer. In it, there is a clear acknowledgment of the Divine providence and goodness, and of our faith and reliance on it. And faith is not only signified in prayer, in these things, but is acted and excited, and by that means is increased and strengthened.

2. Godliness hath both kinds of promises, those of the life to come, and those of this life. 1 Tim. iv. 8. And as godliness hath a right to them both, so, it teacheth to use them both; and particularly this way, by turning the promises into prayers, as a means appointed by God, both to fit us for obtainment, and to obtain the performance of them.

3. Though a man hath his provision by him, not only of a day, but of many years, yet hath he need still daily to ask it of God; for it is still in God's hand to give it him, or not to give, though it is in a man's own hand in present possession. [1.] It is in God's disposal to continue it to him, or suddenly to pluck it from him out of his hand, or even out of his mouth, *ut bolus ereptus è faucibus.* How many have been thus on a sudden turned out of great estates into extreme poverty, either by the hands of men, which are moved by God, or by some immediate accident from his own hand; and others, by little and little, their estates consuming and melting as snow-balls! In the former, the judgment of God is as a *lion*, and in the latter as a *moth*, as the Prophet speaks. Hos. v. 12, 14. Again, [2.] If God do continue a man in his possessions, yet, there is further needful for his cheerful use of daily bread, that calmness and content of mind, and

healthfulness of body, which are God's peculiar gifts, without which all is unsavoury. Is the mind in bitterness or distemper, or the body tied to its sick-bed, this disrelishes a man's daily bread, though it be of the richest kind. [3.] Having bread, and a disposition to use it, yet, there is further an influence of blessing from God needful to make it serve its proper end; and without this, that staff of life is but as a broken staff in a man's hand, that cannot support him. [4.] Besides that ordinary blessing, there is yet something further, that a godly man desires, and desires most of all, a secret character and stamp of the peculiar favour of God even upon his *bread*, his temporal enjoyments. And this is a proper fruit of prayer. As there is (as is already said) a peculiar voice of God's own children in this request, so, God knows it particularly, and distinguishes it from the common voice of natural men, and other creatures that call for supply; and therefore, He gives that peculiar voice of their suit, a peculiar answer: together with the *daily bread* which He gives to others, and a common blessing on it, they have something that is not given to others. This is that which particularly sweetens their bread, that they receive it after a special manner out of their Father's own hand, having humbly asked it by prayer as His gift.

That is the other thing observable in the word of the request, *Give*. We are not by this forbidden, no, nor dispensed with from labour and honest industry for it, but, after all our labour, we are still to acknowledge all as a free gift; both the bread we obtain by labour, and the strength by which we labour. Just as we find it of the other bread, the *bread of life*. John vi. 27. *Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you:* laboured for, and yet given. The fruit of our labours may be a just reward from men, but it is always free from God; even these lowest benefits to the best and holiest men. *I am less*, says Jacob, *than the least of Thy mercies*. Gen. xxxii. 10. We have no motive for the least mercy, but His own goodness as *our Father;* so that it suits with this, as with all the other requests here. Though we deserve nothing, yet He is *our Father:* it is proper for children to ask bread of their father, as our Saviour teaches us in the next chapter; therefore he teaches us here to say, *Father, give us bread*.

II. The moderation of the desire appears in comparison of the number of the other petitions. All the rest are for things spiritual, and but one for temporals: those that regard the glory of God as the chief, are three to one with it; and those that concern our own spiritual good, two for one. Thus for the number. And as for the order or place, which so many have taken quite contrary, it suits very well with this as the least of our requests, and so to be accounted by us. It is strange, that this right place of it should have scared men from its right meaning, and persuaded them to take it for our spiritual food, or the bread of life, because it is the first of the three. But taking it as it is, for this life's necessaries, there is no need of such reasons as some give for its standing in this order, which are a little light and unsolid. But, to omit even those that are more pertinent, which justify this order, though this petition be less than the two following, it seems truly the only fit place for it, for that very reason, because it is the

least. It is known to be the ordinary course of skilful orators, to place the meanest part of their speech in the middle; and in this, let the ear of any understanding mind be judge, whether it sounds not much better, that this request pass in the middle, than if the prayer should have ended with it. Whereas now, it begins spiritually, and closes so. And this petition, which is *de impedimentis militiæ nostræ*, (for the things of this life prove so too often,) is cast in the middle.

Now, how few are there who follow Christ's estimate in this, who have the very strength of their desires, and most of their thoughts, on things that are spiritual, and do but in passing lend a word to the things of this life*! This proportion few will admit: it makes not for their purpose. The Apostle gives this character of those who perish, that they *mind earthly things*. Phil. iii. 19.

But to consider the words, each word designing the matter of this request, doth clearly teach us moderation in it. *Give us our daily bread. Having food and raiment*, says the Apostle, *let us be content*. 1 Tim. vi. 8. How few be there of us, if any, who want these; and yet, how few that have contentment! It is the enormity and boundlessness of our desires, that causeth this. There is no necessity of curious food and raiment, but such food as nourishes, and such raiment as covers.

Our daily bread. In the original, ἐπιούσιοι. Not at all to dispute the word, its genuine sense is, *such as is fit for our daily sustentation;* therefore rendered, *daily bread*. And it answers well to the word in that petition of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8, *convenient* (or *proportionable*) *food*, and so agrees with what we said of bread—*proportionable*, not to our lust, but our necessity. This was the sin of the Jews, and a most impertinent sin, in the wilderness, *They asked meat for their lust:* (Psal. lxxviii. 18.) they were not content with bread for themselves, but must have meat for their lust too, must have that fed likewise. We are not to be carvers of the proportion ourselves, but leave that to God, who knows best what is *convenient* for us; therefore the word is there, *of my set*, or *ordained, portion*—ordained by Thee.

Our bread, [Ἡμῶν.] Not seeking any other than that which is our own by our just industry and God's free gift. What is it but the base, immoderate desire of having, that stretches a man beyond this? When a man lays down that conclusion with himself, that he must have so much, then it follows, that any way tending to that he must use; if he can, by right, but if not, any way rather than miss; by violence and oppression, or by deceit, through all ways, fair and foul†. When a man is once upon that journey there is no stopping, until either God recal him, or he plunge himself in the pit of destruction. *They that will be rich*, says the Apostle, who are resolved upon that, *they fall into temptation and divers snares, which drown men in destruction and perdition*. 1 Tim. vi. 9. That is the issue.

This day. It is true, that this condemns not a due providence in men for themselves and their families, in a just and moderate way. But men deceive themselves in this; few stay there, but, under that

* *Quamprimum à corpore ad animam redeundum.* SENECA.
† *Si possis, rectè, si non, quocunque modo,* REM. HORACE.

name, harbour gross avarice and earthliness. But in this word, we have the true temper of a Christian mind, that, whatsoever is his own awful providence, and whatsoever is the success of it, what he lives and relies on, is, the providence of God, not his own: he lives upon that from one day to another, as a child in his father's house; and for provision for afterwards, thinks it is as good in God's hand as if it were in his own, and therefore asks not so much stock, or so much yearly rent, but *bread for to-day*. If he have much land or great revenues, yet, he trusts no more in that, than if he had nothing; and if he have bread for to-day, and nothing for to-morrow, (as the Israelites had manna,) yet he trusts no less in God than if he had thousands. He resolves thus: Whether I have much or little, I am at God's providing, and live upon that from day to day. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

Εὐσέβεια ἀυτάρκεια, 1 Tim. vi. 6,—these two together, as we have observed them here together, *godliness* and *moderation:* godliness in this particular, of casting over our care of temporal things on God by prayer. So, Phil. iv. 5.—*Let your moderation be known.* But how shall we have it? *Make your requests known unto God*, and that *in all things*. That will ease you, and not trouble Him. But when we lodge such desires as are not fit indeed to be imparted to Him, this is our shame, and proves our vexation. It is a wonder what men mean, but it is a folly so rooted in men's hearts that no discourse will pluck it up; they imagine that there is happiness in having much, and will neither believe religion, nor reason, nor experience, though all teach the contrary. They cannot be persuaded to make this the rule of their desires—*daily bread*, and, *for to-day;* but are still projecting for long time to come, though they are not sure of a day. Men are still beginning to live, even when their years tell them they should be thinking how to die; are upon new contrivances for the world, when they must shortly leave it. And this is one point of this our disease, that it grows still, and is strongest in old age, when there is least reason for it. *Quo minus viæ restat, eo plus viatici comparare.*

What is this that riches can do? Our Saviour tells us, if we will believe him, that *Man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things he possesseth.* Luke xii. 15. There is something necessary, we see, and truly that is not much; and what more than serves, many times proves but mere encumbrance. One staff will help a man in his way, but a bundle of staves would burden and weary him. Would men but stop a little and ask themselves, What is this I do? What do I aim at in all my turmoil? it might possibly recal them. Would they but hear Solomon's question, Eccl. v, 11, and tell him, *what good the rich have of possessing more than they use, but only the beholding of them with their eyes.* If there be any thing more, it is more care and trouble, *et curæ circum laqueata tecta volantes.* He that hath a hundred rooms, hath but one body; he can lodge but in one at once. He that might have sea and land ransacked for delicates of his table, hath himself but one appetite to serve with them all.

Then, consider, that beyond the bounds of this petition, if a man once pass, there be no bounds after; he knows not where to stay. *Depinge ubi sistam.* One thousand would have something more, to

save it unspent; and when that grows a little, it is best even to make another thousand, and save that too, and fall a scraping for more.

And if this is always a frenzy, most of all in these times. *Behold*, says God to Baruch, *I will break down that which I have built, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, and seekest thou great things for thyself?* Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

But is it not wisdom to be provident, and to see far before a man? And to look no further but to the present, is it not the character of a fool? True, it is indeed; and therefore, the truly wise man despises this providence for a base, uncertain life, and is content if alive but from one day to another. But there is a higher design in his head, a providence of a farther reach, that sees afar off indeed, to make himself an estate for eternity. That takes up his thoughts and pains; the other is the grossest short-sightedness, to look no farther than a moment: it is indeed, *μυοπαζειν*, as St. Peter speaks. But that life the Christian's eye is upon, is of another nature, where none of these poor things shall have place, *no marrying, nor giving in marriage*, as our Saviour says; so, no eating or drinking, no need of bread, nor of this prayer for it; but we shall be *as the angels* of God.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.] *Thy loving kindness*, says David, *is better than life*: therefore, this request rises above the former. In it, we sought bread for the present life; in this, we entreat His favour; not corn, nor wine, nor oil, but that which glads the heart more than them all, *the light of His countenance*; that the thick cloud of our sins be dispelled by a free pardon, as He promises, Isa. xliv. 2.

In this petition we have, 1. The request. 2. The clause added.

Forgive us our debts. That which is here called *debts*, St. Luke hath *sins*; and here, in the observation our Saviour adds, they are called, *παραπτώματα*, *offences*. Now sin, as it is called a debt, is taken for the guiltiness of sin, which is no other than *pœnas debere*, to *owe the suffering of punishment*, or an obligement to the curse which the Law hath pronounced against sin; and because this results so immediately from sin, therefore, sin is often put for the engagement to punishment; so the Apostle's phrase, 1 Cor. xv. ult., may be taken. So then, the debt of sin being the tie to punishment which follows upon it, the forgiving of sin can be no other than the acquitting of a man from that curse, setting him free from his debt, his engagement to suffer; and therefore, to imagine a forgiveness of sin with retaining of the punishment, is direct nonsense, and a contradiction.

To pass the words of this request through our mouths, as the rest, is an easy and common thing, but altogether fruitless; but to offer it as a spiritual supplication of the heart unto God, is a thing done but by a few; and to as many as do offer it so, it never returns in vain, but is certainly granted. Now, to offer it so, as a lively spiritual suit unto God, there are necessarily supposed in the soul that presents it, these things:—

1. A clear conviction and deep sense of the guiltiness of sin. Both in *general*, what this guiltiness is, what is that debt which sin engages us in, that misery to which it binds us over; as, first, the deprivement of happiness, the loss of God and His favour for ever; and secondly,

the endless endurance of His wrath and hottest indignation, and all the anguish which that is able to fill the soul with to all eternity. Unsufferable, inconceivable torment, described to us by such things as we can understand, but going infinitely beyond them, *a gnawing worm that dies not*, and *a fire* that cannot be quenched. *This is the portion of the sinner from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God*, as Zophar speaks, Job xx. 29. Then, in *particular*, there must be a seeing of our own guiltiness. A man must know himself to be nothing else than a mass of sin, and so, fuel for that fire; must see himself a transgressor of the whole law of God, and therefore abundantly liable to that sentence of death.

2. Upon this apprehension will follow a very earnest desire to be free, and such a word as that, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!* And seeing no way either to satisfy or escape, without a free pardon, the soul then looks upon that as its only happiness, with David: *Blessed is the man*—O the blessedness of that man!—*whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Psal. xxxii. 1.

3. In this request, there is a taking of it as a thing attainable; for it is implied that there is no impossibility in it. And this arises from the promises of God, and the tenor of the covenant of grace, and the Mediator of that covenant revealed in the word, apprehended only in their general tenor.

4. It imports a humble confession of guiltiness before the Lord; as it follows there, Psal. xxxii. 5: *I acknowledged my sin, and mine iniquity have I not hid.* The way to find God hiding and covering it, he perceived, was for himself not to hide it. The way to be acquitted at God's hand, is for the soul with humility and grief to accuse itself before Him.

5. Where there is this sensible knowledge and humble acknowledgment of sin and misery, and earnest desire of pardon, then doth a man truly offer this suit unto God with strong affection, *Lord, this is my request, that my sin may be forgiven;* and prays it in faith, which is a more particular laying hold on the promises, believing that He will forgive, and therefore waits for an answer, to hear that *voice of joy and gladness*, as David speaks, Psal. li. 8, to hear the word of his pardon from God spoken into his soul. And for this cause, (besides the need of daily pardon for daily sins,) the most godly men have need to renew this suit, that, together with pardon, they may obtain the comfortable persuasion and assurance of it. And though they have some assurance, yet, there be further degrees of it possible, and desirable, clearer evidences of reconcilement and acceptance with God. Forgiveness itself is, indeed, the main, and is often granted where the other, the assurance of it, is withheld for a time; but there is no question that we may, yea, that we ought to desire it, and seek after it. He is blessed who is pardoned, though as yet he know it not; yet, doubtless, it abates much of his happiness for the time that he does not know it. *Non est beatus, esse qui se non putet.*

The philosopher says, *The poor man thinks him happy who is rich, and the sick man, him who is in health:* their own wants make them think so. Now, this forgiveness of sin is happiness indeed; yet, a man must first feel the want of it, before he judge so. But here is the

difference: when he hath obtained it, he shall think so still; whereas the other, being tried, are found to fall short, and do not make any man happy.

Seeing this is a request of so great moment, may we not wonder at ourselves, that we are so cold and indifferent in it? But the true reason of this is, because so few are truly sensible of this heavy debt, of the weight of sin unpardoned. A man who feels it not, prays thus, not much troubling his thoughts whether it be granted or no; but he who is indeed pressed with the burden of sin, cries in earnest, *Lord, forgive.* David knew what he said, when he called him *blessed whose sin is forgiven;* the word is, who is *unloaded of his sin.* He was a king, and a great captain, but he says not, He is a blessed man who wears a crown, or who is successful in war, but, Blessed is he whose sin is taken off his shoulders; whatsoever he is otherwise, he is a happy man. It is in vain to offer a conscience groaning under sin, any thing else, until it be eased of that. If you should see a man lying grovelling under some weight that is ready to press him to death, and should bring sweet music to him, and cover a table with delicates before him, but let him lie still under his burden, could he, think you, take any pleasure in those things? Were it not rather to mock him, to use him so?

And though we feel it not as troubled consciences do, yet, we are truly miserable in all enjoyments, until this forgiveness be obtained. To what purpose daily bread, yea, what is the greatest abundance of all outward things, but a glistering misery, if this be wanting? But he who is once forgiven, and received into favour with God, what can befall him amiss? Though he hath no more of the world than *daily bread*, and of the coarsest sort, he hath a continual feast within: as he that said, *Brown bread and the Gospel, is good fare.* Now, the Gospel is the doctrine of this forgiveness of sin, and is therefore so sweet to an humbled sinner. Yea, though a man have not only a small portion of earthly comforts, but be under divers afflictions and chastisements, yet, this makes him cheerful in all: as Luther said, *Feri, Domine*, &c. Use me as Thou wilt, seeing Thou hast forgiven my sin, all is well.

Lastly, As there must be earnest desire in the request, so withal, firm belief. *Ask in faith.* If once thou art become a humble suitor for mercy, and that is the great desire of thy heart, that God would take away thy sin, and be reconciled to thee; then know, that He will not cast back thy petition in displeasure. Now, He is gracious, and whatsoever thou hast been, consider what He is. Doth He receive any for any thing in themselves? What is the cause He pardons any? Is it not for His own name's sake? Isa. xliii. 25. And will not that reason serve for thee, as much as for others? Will it not avail for many sins, as well as for few? Hast thou multiplied sin often, abused His mercy, but now mournest before Him for it? Then He will multiply pardon. Isa. lv. 7, Jer. iii. 1. Thou hast rebelled much, but He is thy Father, and hath the bowels of a father to a repenting child. And this style we give Him in this prayer, as fitly urging all our suits, *Father, forgive us our sins: therefore* forgive, because Thou art *our Father.* And then consider, that *he* who puts this petition,

amongst the rest, in our mouths, hath satisfied for believers, paid all their scores, and answered justice to the full, and in him we are forgiven: it is a free forgiveness to us, though he hath paid for it: and he himself was freely given to us, to undertake and satisfy for us. Yet, let not any thus embolden themselves to sin: this were the grossest impudence, to come to crave pardon of sin while we delight in it, and to desire it to be forgiven, while we have no mind to part with it and forsake it. For this privilege belongs only to repenting and returning sinners.

As we forgive our debtors. This is added both as a fit motive for us to use with God, and as a suitable duty that He requires of us. The former, we may perceive in the manner that St. Luke hath it: *For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.* Thou, Lord, requirest of us to forgive others, and Thou workest it in some of us to do so: how much more then may we hope, Thou wilt forgive us? If there be any such goodness in us, it is from Thee, and therefore is infinitely more in Thyself, as the ocean of goodness.

Again, this is likewise a very profitable argument to move us to this duty; as we see clearly by our Saviour's returning to speak of it after the prayer: it is not only bound upon us by this precept, but by our prayer.

This (*as,*) just as before in the third petition, means not equality in the degree, but conformity in the thing.

Now, the request running thus, they who do not forgive their brethren, turn it into a most heavy curse to themselves, and, in effect, pray daily, *Lord, never forgive me my sin.* And whether they say this or no, He will do thus, if we be such fools as not to accept of such an agreement. He hath infinite debt upon our heads, that we shall never be able to pray: now, though there is no proportion, yet He is graciously pleased, without further reckoning, to forgive us all, and discharge us fully, if we accept (as it were) of this His letter of exchange, and for His sake forgive our brethren the few pence that at the most they can be owing us, in lieu of the thousands of talents that He acquits to us. And by this as our certain evidence, we may be assured of our pardon, and rejoice in it, as our Saviour after clearly affirms; and therefore, on the contrary, (which he likewise tells us,) may well take our debates, and hatreds, and desires of revenge, as a countersign, testifying to us that we are *not* forgiven at God's hands.

And think not to satisfy him with superficial forgivenesses and reconcilements. Would we be content with such pardon from God, to have only a present forbearance of revenge, or that He should not quarrel with us, but no further friendship with Him; that He should either use strangeness with us, and not speak to us, or only for fashion's sake? And yet, such are many of our reconcilements with our brethren. God's way of forgiving is thorough and hearty, both to forgive and to forget (as Jer. xxxi.); and if thine be not so, thou hast no portion in His.

What a base, miserable humour is this same desire of revenge, this spirit of malice that possesses men, and they think themselves brave in it, that they forgive no injuries, can put up with no affronts, as they speak! Solomon was of another mind, and he was a king, and a wise

king, and knew well enough what honour meant: *It is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression*, said he, Prov. xix. 11. And we see, inferior magistrates and officers may punish; but it is a part of the prerogative of kings to pardon: it is royal to forgive, yea, it is Divine, it is to be like a God. Matt. v. 44—8. *Be you perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect*—and the perfection is—*Do good to them that persecute you*, &c., *as* He *causeth the sun to shine on the just and the unjust.*

There is more true pleasure in forgiving, than ever any man found in revenge. Fr. Desales said, "That whereas men think it so hard a thing to forgive a wrong, he found it so sweet, that, if the contrary were commanded him, he would have much ado to obey it." Where the law of love written in our hearts, it would be thus with us. It would teach us effectually to forgive others, if we knew and found in our experience the boundless love of God in forgiving us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.] As the doctrine of Divine mercy, mistaken and abused by carnal minds, emboldens them to sin; so, being rightly apprehended and applied, there is nothing more powerful to possess the heart with indignation against sin, and love of holiness. So that this request agrees most fitly with the former: where *that* is presented aright, the heart will be no less sincere and earnest in this other. The guiltiness of sin, and the prevailing power of it, are the two evils which the godly feel more than all other pressures in the world. Deliverance from both, is jointly promised in the new covenant, (Jer. xxxi. 33, 4.) and is here jointly entreated in these two petitions. We shall explain,

I. What this *temptation* and *evil* is.

II. What is meant by, *not leading into* it, and *delivering from* it.

1. *Temptation.*] In the original, Πειρασμὸν, a trial; that which gives proof of a man's strength and of his disposition, which draws forth what is within him. And thus, in most things we meet withal in the world, there is some *tempting* faculty, to try us what we are, on the using of them. But especially such things as are more eminent in their nature, that have much power with us: as eminent place and public charge try both the ability and integrity of men: afflictions try the faith and stability of men's minds; injuries try whether they are truly meek and patient or no; they stir the water that was possibly clear at top, and so try whether it be not muddy at the bottom.

But by *temptation* here, are meant, occasions and provocations to sin. So likewise, the word (*evil*) in the other clause, is not to be taken for afflictions and crosses, but, for the *evil of sin*, or, for that *Evil One*, as he is called, 1 John ii. 13; and that, particularly in relation to the evil of sin, wherein he hath so frequent and so great a hand.

There be outward things which are not in themselves evil, and yet prove temptations to us, because they meet with a depraved, corrupt heart in us; as riches, and honour, and beauty, and, to intemperance, dainty meats, or the *wine when it is red in the cup*, as Solomon speaks; and upon these, men sometimes turn over the blame of their disorders, but most foolishly.

Other temptations and tempters there be without us, which are

themselves evil, and, by tempting, partake of our sin; the profane example and customs of the world; ungodly men by their practices, and counsels, and enticements, drawing others to sin, putting others into the same mire wherein they are wallowing.

But the most effectual temper of all, is that which the apostle St. James gives as the chief, and without which, indeed, none other could prevail. Jam. i. 14. *Every man is tempted of his own concupiscence.* Whosoever it is that begets it, that is the womb wherein all sin is conceived, and that *brings it forth*, as he there adds: yea, this were able of itself to be fruitful in sin, though there were not a devil to tempt it to it, and doth no doubt often tempt us without his help.

Yet because he is so continually busied in this work, is so constant a stickler in the greatest part of sins in the world, therefore, it is not unlikely that this is particularly meant of *him*.

Howsoever, he is, out of doubt, the greatest of all inward tempters, (and therefore it is pertinent to consider his share in them,) the most skilful, the most active and diligent, and he that manages all other kind of temptations against us, both such as are without us in the world and, such as are within us: he works upon our own corruption, stirring and blowing it up by his suggestions, and sometimes throwing in balls of his own infernal fire, which are grievous and abominable to the soul into which he casts them. It is his name and profession, ὁ πειραζων, that great *pirate*, who robs upon all seas, who is every where catching the souls of men. And he is well seen in his trade, a known spirit, who manifested his skill shrewdly in his first essay against man; that serpent's first poison killed the whole race of mankind; and now he is perfected by long experience and practice, hath his methods, as arts after a time are drawn into method. He hath his topics, his several sorts of temptations for several tempers, and hath great insight into the subject he is to work upon, and so fits the one to the other.

The profane, who will be easily drawn to the grossest sins, he is not at the pains to find out other ways for them, but hurries them along in that highway to destruction, using his advantage either of their gross ignorance or hardness of heart. Others, who are resolved to live outwardly blameless, he endeavours to take and hold fast to himself by pride, and self-love, and malice, and covetousness, by formality in religion, unbelief; which are things, though smaller wrought than some others, yet, that are as strong, and hold men as fast to be led captive at his will.

And the godly, because they are escaped and set free from his tyranny, and he is desperate of reducing them, yet, because he can do no more, he is sure to be a perpetual vexation and trouble to them, so far as he is let loose: he is most unwearied in his assaults, gives them no respite, neither when he gains upon them, nor when he is foiled and repulsed.

II. Let us next consider what the request is,—not to be *led into temptation*, and, to be *delivered from evil*.

Lead us not. Not that God doth solicit a man to sin, for that is most contrary to His most pure nature: as St. James tells us plainly, *He is neither so tempted, nor tempts He any.* But His leading into

temptation is, briefly, [1.] To permit a man to be tempted. [2.] To withdraw His grace, and so deliver up a man into the hand or power of temptation. Now this is what we pray, That the Lord would be pleased either to bear off assaults from us, and suffer us not to be tempted; or, if He let temptation loose upon us, yet, to give us the better, to order it so that it overcome us not. That which is here meant by *leading* or *carrying us into temptation*, is, the prevailing of it, or leading us unto a foil, and this we pray that He would not do; that, if He do bring us into the conflict of a temptation, He would not leave us there, but bring us fair off again. And thus the whole petition runs, *Lead us not, but deliver us.* And in this it is implied, that He would furnish us with His own grace, the holy habits of grace to be within us, as a constant garrison; and then, that either He countermand our enemy from assaulting, or that they be such as overmatch not the strength He hath given us, but may be below it; or, that He send us the auxiliary strength of supervenient, assisting grace to that we have, that howsoever, the forces that come against us may be turned backward, and we may have the comfort, and He the glory, of our victories.

So, then, in this we are taught, 1. To know the danger wherein we are; that we live in the midst of enemies, and such as are strong and subtle; that we have the Prince of darkness plotting against us, and the treacherous corruption of our own hearts ready to keep correspondence with him, and betray us to him; that he hath gins and snares laid for us in all our ways, *laqueos ubique, laqueos in cibo et potu*, as Augustine speaks—snares in our solitude and in our converse, and in our eating and drinking, yea, snares in our spiritual exercise, our hearing, preaching, prayer, &c., and therefore, as He here teaches us to *pray* against them, we must join that, [1.] To *watch* against them. [2.] To be sensible of our own weakness and insufficiency, either for avoiding or overcoming these dangers. [3.] To know the all-sufficient strength of God, His sovereign power over all adverse powers, that they are all under His command, so that He can keep them off from us, or subdue them under us, as He pleaseth; and so to have our recourse to this, and rest in it. The first of these considerations, if it take with us, will stir us up to watchfulness, and the other two will persuade to prayer: and these are the two great preservatives against temptation which our Saviour prescribes: *Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Watch*—How can we sleep secure, and so many enemies that sleep not? If we pray and watch not, we tempt God, and we lead ourselves into temptation. It is our duty, (mock the word who will,) to walk exactly or precisely ἀκριβῶς, to look to every step, to beware of the least sins. For, [1.] they by multitude make a great weight. [2.] They prove usually introductions to greater sins. Admit but some inordinate desire into your heart, that you account a small matter, and it is a hundred to one but it shall prove a little thief got in, to open the door to a number of greater: as the Rabbins speak, a less evil brings a man into the hands of a greater*.

2. Avoid, not only sins, but the incentives and occasions to sin

* *Levius malum inducit in manus gravioris.* Drus.

As St. Chrysostom observes well that exhortation of our Saviour, *When they shall say, here is Christ, and there is Christ*, he says not, *Believe them not*, but *Go not forth to see*. And Solomon's instruction for avoiding the allurements of the strange woman says not only, *Go not in*, but *Come not near the door of her house*. The way of sin is *motus in proclivi*, down-hill: a man cannot stop where he would; and he that will be tampering with dangerous occasions, in confidence of his resolution, shall find himself often carried beyond his purpose. If you pray, then, watch too. But as that word commands our diligence, so this imports our weakness in ourselves, and our strength to be in Another; that, as we watch, we must pray; and without this, we shall watch in vain, and be a prey to our enemy. Truly, had we no power beyond our own, we might give over, and be hopeless of coming through to salvation, so many enemies and hazards in the way. *Alas!* might a Christian say, looking upon the multitude of temptations without, and of corruptions within himself, and the weakness of the grace he hath, *How can this be? Shall I ever attain my journey's end?* But again, when he looks upward, and lifts his eyes above his difficulties, beholds the strength of God engaged for Him, directs his prayers to him for help, and is assured to find it; this upholds him, and answers all. There is *a roaring lion* that *seeks to devour*, but there is a strong rescuing lion, *The Lion of the tribe of Judah*, who will deliver. *The God of peace*, says the Apostle, *will bruise Satan under your feet shortly*. Rom. xvi. 20. He says not, *we* shall bruise him under our feet, but *God* shall do it. Yet, he says not, He shall bruise him under *His own* feet, but under *yours:* the victory shall be ours, though wrought by Him. And He shall do it *shortly:* wait a while, and it shall be done. And *The God of peace*, because He is the God of peace, He shall subdue that grand disturber of your peace, and shall give you a perfect victory, and, after it, endless peace: He shall free you of his trouble and molestation. Grace is a stranger here, and therefore hardly used, and hated by many foes; but there is a promise of a *new heaven and a new earth where dwells righteousness:* there it shall be at home and in quiet; no spoiling nor robbery in all that holy mountain.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

This pattern, we know, is the line under which all our prayers ought to move: all our requests are to be conformed to it, and are certainly out of their way, when they decline and wander from it. And if we observe it, we may clearly perceive, it is a circular line; (as indeed the exercise of prayer is a heavenly motion, circular as that of the heavens;) it begins and ends in the same point, the glory of that God to whom we pray, and who is the God that heareth prayer. In that point this prayer begins, and here ends in it; so that our requests which concern ourselves are cast in the middle, that all our desires may move within this circle:—though the things we pray for, concern ourselves, yet, they are not to terminate in ourselves, but in Him who is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End of all things. We are to desire, not only the blessings of this life, but the blessedness of the life to come, more for His glory than for our own good.

This is genuine and pure love to God, in the pardon of our sins and salvation, to rejoice more in the glory of Divine mercy, than in our own personal happiness. Thus it shall be with us, when we shall be put in possession of it, and we ought to aspire to that measure of the same mind which can be attained here, while we are in the desire and hope of it.

For thine is the kingdom.] Though this clause is left out in divers translations, and wanting in some Greek copies, yet it is so agreeable to the nature of prayer, and to the perfection of this prayer, that we ought not to let it pass unconsidered.

There is in it an enforcement of our prayer; but especially, it is a return of praise. Good reason we should desire earnestly the sanctifying of Thy name, and the coming of Thy kingdom, and obedience to Thy will, seeing these are so peculiarly due to Thee, namely, *kingdom, and power, and glory.* And seeing Thou art so great and rich a king, may we not crave with confidence at Thy hands, all needful good things to be bestowed on us, and that all evil may be averted from us; that we may find Thee gracious to us, both in giving and forgiving; and as in forgiving us the guiltiness of sin, so, in freeing us from the power of sin, and preserving us from the power of our spiritual enemies that would draw us into sin? We are under Thy royal protection, we are Thy subjects, yea, Thy children, Thou art our King and Father; so that Thy honour is engaged for our defence. Whatsoever sum our debts amount to, they are not too great for such a King to forgive; they cannot rise above Thy royal goodness, and whatsoever be our enemies, all their force is not above Thy sceptre: though they be strong, too strong for us, yet, Thou art much too strong for them, for *power* is Thine. And this we know, that all the good Thou dost us will bring back glory to thy Name, and it is that we most desire, and that which is Thy due; the *glory is Thine.*

Thus we see, all our grounds of argument for our requests, are in God, none of them in ourselves: as we find this in the prayers of the Prophets, *For Thine own glory,* and *For thine own name's sake.* There is nothing in ourselves to move God by, but abundance of misery; and that moves not, but by reason of His bounty: so still, the cause of His hearing, and the argument of our entreating, are in Himself alone. Were it not thus, how could we hope to prevail with Him? Yea, how durst we offer to come unto Him? It is well for us, there is enough in Himself both to encourage us to come, and to furnish us with motives to persuade Him by, that we come not in vain. Moses had not a word to say for the people in themselves: such was their carriage, his mouth was stopped that way; yet, he doth not let go this, What wilt thou do with thy *mighty Name?* It is true, they have trespassed, yet, if Thou destroy them, Thy name will suffer. Lord, consider and regard That. And we know the success of it. Thus, a Christian for himself may plead: Lord, I am most unworthy of all those things I request of Thee, but, whatsoever I am, thou art a liberal and mighty king, and it is Thy glory to do good freely; therefore it is that I come unto Thee: my necessities drive me to Thee, and Thy goodness draws me, and the poorer and wretcheder I am, the greater will be thy glory in helping me.

But it is withal, an extolling and praising of the greatness of God, and so we are to consider it.

Thine is the kingdom. Other kings and kingdoms there be, but they are as nothing, they deserve not the naming, in comparison of Thine. They are but kings of little mole-hills, to the bounds of Thy dominion. The greatest kingdoms of the world are but small parcels of this globe of earth, and itself altogether, to the vast circumference of the heavens, is as nothing—loses all sensible greatness. This point which men are so busy dividing among them with fire and sword, what if one man had the sovereignty of it all? He and kingdom both were nothing to Thine; for sea and land, earth and heaven, and all the creatures in them all, the whole, all is Thine. Thou art Lord of heaven and earth, and therefore, *the kingdom is Thine.* As all other kingdoms are less than Thine, so, they hold of thine, Thine is supreme: all the crowns and sceptres of the earth, hang at thy footstool. All kings owe their homage to this great King, and He disposeth of their crowns absolutely and uncontrolled as He will. He enthrones and dethrones at His pleasure, throws down one and sets up another: as we have a great monarch confessing it at length upon his own experience, being brought down from his throne, on purpose to learn this lesson, and was seven years in learning it. Dan. iv. 34.

The power. The creatures have among them several degrees and several kinds of power, but none of them, nor all of them together, have all power; this is God's. He is all-powerful in Himself, primitively powerful. And all the power of the creatures is derived from Him: He is the fountain of power. So that, whatsoever power He hath given unto men, or any other creature, He hath not given away from Himself: it is still in Himself more than in them, and at His pleasure He can call it back, and withdraw the influence of it, and then they remain weak and powerless. And when He gives them power, he useth and disposeth of both them and their power as seems him good. Therefore, His style is *The Lord of Hosts.* He can command more armies than all the kings and princes of the earth: from the most excellent, to the meanest of the creatures, all are His trained bands; from the host of glorious spirits, to the very armies of grasshoppers and flies. And you know, that as an angel was employed against the Egyptians, so likewise these contemptible creatures were upon service there too, and being armed with commission and with power from God, did perform the service upon which they were sent so effectually, that the wisest of heathens were forced to confess, *This is the finger of God.*

This is the Lord to whom we address our prayers, who cannot fail in any thing for want of power, for *He doeth what He will in heaven and in earth.*

The glory. In these two consists mainly the eminency of kings, in their power and their majesty; but they exceed not the meanest of their subjects, so far as THIS King surpasseth the greatest of them in both; Psal. xciii. 1. *Clothed with* both *majesty and strength.* They are often resisted, and cut short of their designs for want of sufficient power and are (the best of them) often driven to straits; sometimes men, sometimes money or munition, or some other necessary help is

wanting, and so their enterprises fall behind. But this King can challenge and defy all oppositions: *I work*, says He, *and who shall let it?* Isa. xliii. 13.

And as their power, so, their majesty and glory is infinitely short of His. *He is the King of Glory*, as the Psalmist styles him, Psal. xxiv. 10, alone truly glorious, both in the excellency of His own nature, and the extrinsical glory that arises to Him out of His works. Of the former, we can know but little here, for that *light* wherein he dwells is to us *inaccessible* (1 Tim. vi. 16); but this we know, that He is infinitely above all the praises even of those that do behold Him. Likewise, how unspeakable is that glory which shines in His works, in the framing of the whole world, and in the upholding and ruling of it from the beginning! In which appear the two former that are here ascribed to Him, *His kingdom* and *His power;* and so, this third, *His glory*, springs out of both. Then if we consider the glorious attendance that is continually about His throne, as the Scriptures describe it to us, it drowns all the pomp of earthly thrones and courts in their highest degree. See Rev. iv.

For ever. This kingdom, and power, and glory of God, besides their transcendent greatness, have this advantage beyond all other kingdoms, and power, and glory, that His are *for ever and ever*, all other are perishing, nothing but pageants and shows that appear for a while, and pass along and vanish. It was a wise word of a king, (especially at such a time,) when he was riding in a stately triumph, and asked by one of his courtiers, thinking to please him, What is wanting here? he answered *Continuance.* Where are all the magnific kings that have reigned in former ages? Where is their power and their pomp? Is it not past like a dream? And not only are the kings gone, but the kingdoms themselves, the greatest in the world have fallen to nothing; they had their time of rising, and again of declining, and are buried in the dust. That golden-headed image had brittle feet, and that was the ruin and break of it all. But this kingdom of the most High is an everlasting kingdom, and His glory and power abide for ever.

Not only things on earth decay, but the very heavens *wax old as a garment*, says the Psalmist, *but Thou, O Lord, art still the same, and Thy years have no end.*

Refl. 1. It is a thing of very great importance, for us to have our hearts established in the belief of these things, and to be frequent in remembering and considering them: to know that the kingdom is the Lord's, that He sovereignly rules the world and all things in it, and particularly the great affairs of His Church: that He is the mighty God, and therefore, that there is no power, or wisdom, or counsel of men, able to prevail against him; and that in those things wherein His glory seems to suffer for the present, it shall gain and be advanced in the close.

2. Let us always, and in all things, return this to Him as His peculiar due: *Thine is the glory;* it belongs to Thee, and to none other. *Deo quæ Dei sunt:* To God the things which are God's.

3. Let us think most reverently of God. Oh, that we could attain to esteeming thoughts of Him, to think more of His greatness and

excellency beyond all the world! It is our great folly to admire any thing but God. This is because we are ignorant of Him. Certainly, he knows not God, who thinks any thing great beside him.

Amen.] In this word concentre all the requests, and are put up together: *so be it.* And there is in it withal, as all observe, a profession of confidence that it shall be so. It is from one root with those words which signify *believing* and *truth.* The truth of God's promising, persuades belief; and *it* persuades to hope for a gracious answer of prayer. And this is the excellent advantage of the prayer of faith, that it quiets and establishes the heart in God. Whatsoever be its estate and desire, when once the believer hath put his petition into God's hand, he rests content in holy security and assurance concerning the answer; refers it to the wisdom and love of God, how and when he will answer; not doubting that whatsoever it be, and whensoever, it shall both be gracious and seasonable. But the reason why so few of us find that sweetness and comfort that are in prayer, is, because the true nature and use of it is so little known.

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. xx. 1, 2.

And God spake all these words, saying,
I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

It is the character of *the blessed man*, and the way of blessedness, *to delight in the law of God*. Psal. i. 2. And because the eye is often upon that whereon the affection and delight of the heart is set, the sign of that delight in the Law, is to have the eye of the mind much upon it, *to meditate on it day and night*. And that we may know this is not, as the study of many things are, empty speculation and fruitless barren delight, we are further taught, that the soul that is fixed in this delight and meditation, is a tree well planted, and answerably fruitful. The mind that is set upon this Law, is fitly set for bearing fruit. *Planted by the rivers of water;* and is really fruitful, *Bringing forth its fruit in its season.*

If this holds true of the Law in the largest sense, taken for the whole will of God revealed in His word, it is, no doubt, particularly verified in that which more particularly bears the name of *The Law;* this same summary of the rule of man's life, delivered by the Lord himself, after so singular a manner both by word and writ.

So then, the explication of it being needful for the ignorant, it will be likewise profitably delightful for those who be most knowing and best acquainted with it. It is a rich mine, that we can never dig to the bottom of. He is called *the blessed man*, who is still digging and seeking further into the riches of it, *meditating on it day and night;* his work going forward in the night, when others cease from working.

We have in the Creed, the Object of *faith;* in the Law, the exercise and trial of *love:* for *Love is the fulfilling of the law;* and, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, saith our Saviour. And Prayer is the breathing of *hope*, or, as they call it, *Interpretatio spei.* Thus, in these three summaries, are the matter of these three prime theological virtues, *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*.

The Law rightly understood, addresses us to the articles of our faith: for seeing the disproportion of our best obedience to the exactness of the Law, this drives us to seek salvation in the Gospel by believing; and our natural inability to believe, drives us to Prayer, that we may obtain faith, and perseverance in it, at His hands who is both the first *Author and the Finisher of our faith.*

The preparation enjoined upon the people, teacheth the holiness of this Law. The fire, and thunder, and lightning, and, upon these, the fear of the people, testify the greatness and majesty of the Lawgiver, and withal, His power to punish the transgressors of it, and His justice that will punish; that, as He showed His presence by fire seen in delivering this Law, so He is (as the Apostle teacheth us, alluding to this) *a consuming fire* to them who neglect and disobey it. The limits set about the mount, that they might not approach it, even after all their endeavour of sanctifying and preparing, read, [1.] *humility* to us, teaching us our great distance from the holiness of our God, even when we are most holy and exact in our preparations; and [2.] *sobriety*, [φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν] not to pry into hidden things; to hear what is revealed to us and commanded us, and to exercise ourselves in that. *Scrutator majestatis opprimetur à gloria. Hidden things belong unto God, but those which are revealed to us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law.* Deut. xxix. 29.

Lastly, we are taught, That the Law of itself, is *the ministration of death*, and hath nothing but terror in it, till the Messiah, the Mediator appear, and the soul, by his perfect obedience, be accounted obedient to the Law. But we must not insist on this now.

The Preface is twofold. I. That of Moses. II. That of God himself.

I. *God spake all these words.* Ten words. Exod. xxxiv. 28; Deut. v. 22. He added no more. Hence we may learn, (1.) The perfection of this law, that no more was needful to be added. (2.) The excellency of it, being so short, and yet, so perfect. For as it is the excellency of all speech, as of coin, (as Plutarch hath it,) to contain much in little, most value in smallest quantity; so, especially of laws, that they be brief and full.

That we may the better conceive of the perfection of this Law, we must not forget those rules which divines give for the understanding of it in its due latitude. (1.) That the prohibitions of sin contain the commands of the contrary good; otherwise, the number of precepts would have been too great. And, on the contrary, (2.) Under the name of any one sin, all homogeneous sins, or sins of that kind, are forbidden. (3.) All the inducements and occasions of sin, things that come near a breach, are to be avoided: that which the Rabbins call the *hedge* of the Law, is not to be broken. They who do always all that they lawfully may, will sometimes do more. (4.) It is spiritual, hath that prerogative above all human laws, that it reaches the heart and all the motions of it, as well as words and actions. This Supreme Lawgiver alone can see the behaviour of the heart, and alone is able to punish all who offend so much as in thought. It were a vain thing, for men to give laws to any, more than what they can require account of and correct, which is only the surface and outside of human actions. But He who made the heart, doth not only give His law to it, but to *it* principally, and examines all actions there in their source and beginning; and therefore, oftentimes, that which men applaud and reward, and do well in so doing, He justly hates and punishes.

God spake. All that was spoken by His Messengers the prophets, with warrant from Him, was His word; they but the trumpets which

the breath of His mouth, His Spirit made to sound as it pleased Him; but this His moral Law, He privileged with His own immediate delivery. Men may give some few rules for society and civil life, by the dark light that remains in natural consciences; but such a rule as may direct a man to answer his natural end, and lead him to God, must come from God Himself. All the purest and wisest laws that men have compiled, cannot reach that: they can go no higher in their course, than they are in their spring. *That which is from the earth is earthly*, saith our Saviour.

He added to this speaking, the *writing* of them likewise, Himself in tables of stone, that they might abide, and be conveyed to after ages. At first they were written in the heart of man, by God's own hand; but, as the first tables of stone fell and were broken, so was it with man's heart: by his fall, his heart was broken, and scattered amongst the earthly perishing things which was before whole and entire to his Maker; and so, the characters of that law written in it, were so shivered and scattered, that they could not be perfectly and distinctly read in it. Therefore, it pleased God to renew that law after this manner, by a most solemn delivery with audible voice, and then by writing it on tables of stone. And this is not all, but this same law He doth write anew in the hearts of His children.

Why it pleased Him to defer this solemn promulgation of the Law to this time, and at this time to give it to a select people only, these are *arcana imperii*—state secrets, indeed, which we are not to search into, but to magnify His goodness to us, that He hath showed us the path of life, revealing to us both the precepts of the Law, and the grace and promises of the Gospel.

It was the All-wise God who spake all these words; therefore, He knew well His own aim and purpose in them, and doth certainly attain it.

It was not, indeed, that this Law might be the adequate and complete means of man's happiness, that by perfect obedience to it he might be saved; for the Law is *weak* for this, not in itself, but *through the flesh*. Rom. vii. 3. It is altogether impossible for it alone to save us, because impossible for us to fulfil it. But it doth profit us much if we look aright upon it.

1. It discovers us to ourselves, and so humbles us, frees us from the pride that is so natural to us in the midst of our great poverty and wretchedness. For when we see how pure the law is, and we, compared with it, to be all filthiness and defilement, *our best righteousness*, as Isaiah says, *as filthy rags;* this causeth us to abhor ourselves. Whereas naturally, we are abused with self-love, and self-flattery arising from it. The point of the Law, (as they in the Acts were said to be *pricked in their hearts,*) pricks the heart, which is swelled and puffed up with pride, and makes it fall low in sense of vileness.

2. As this discovery humbles us in ourselves, so it drives us out of ourselves. This glass shewing us our pollution, sends us to *the fountain opened*. When we perceive that, by the sentence of the Law, there is nothing for us but death, this makes us hearken diligently to the news of redemption and pardon proclaimed in the Gospel, and hastens us to the Mediator of the *new covenant*. As the spouse was

then singularly rejoiced to find her Beloved, when she had been beaten and hardly used by reproaching, (Cant. v. 7,) so the soul is then gladdest to meet with Christ, when it is hardest buffeted with the terrors and threatenings of the Law. His promise of ease and refreshment sounds sweet after the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai. A man will never go to Christ, so long as he is not convinced of misery without him, of impotency in himself, and in all others to help him.

3. It restrains the wickedness even of ungodly men. The *brightness* of it makes them sometimes ashamed of those works of darkness which otherwise they would commit without check; and the *terrors* of it affright them sometimes from that which they would otherwise commit without shame.

4. But chiefly it serves for a rule and square of life to the godly; *a light to their feet*, as David says, *and a lantern to their paths.* Either they have no rule of life, (which is impious and unreasonable to think,) or this is it. Christ came not to dissolve it, but to accomplish and establish it; and he did carefully free it from the injurious glosses of the Pharisees, and taught the right sense and force of it. See Matt. v. He obeyed it both in doing and in suffering; both performing what it requires, and, in our stead, undergoing what it pronounces against those who perform it not. It is a promise chiefly intended for the days of the Gospel, as the Apostle applies it, *I will write My law in their hearts.* It is a weak conceit arising upon the mistake of the Scriptures, to make Christ and Moses as opposites. No, Moses was the *servant in the house*, and Christ, *the Son;* and being *a faithful servant*, he is not contrary to the Son, but subordinate to him. Heb. iii. 5. The very abolishment of the Ceremonial Law, was not as of a thing contrary, but as a thing accomplished in Christ, and so was an honourable abolishment. And the removing of the curse and rigour of the Moral Law from us, was without wrong to it, being satisfied in a better for us, our surety, Jesus Christ.

They are happy, who look so on the Law of God, as to be made sensible of misery by it, and by that made earnest in their desires of Christ; and who judge themselves, the more evidence they have of freedom from the curse of the Law, to be not the less, but so much the more obliged to obey the Law; who are still making progress and going on in that way of obedience, though it be with continual halting, and often stumbling, and sometimes falling; yet they shall certainly attain their journey's end, that perfection whereof they are so desirous.

This were the way to lowliness, not to compare ourselves with others, in which too many are often partial judges, but with this holy Law. We use not to try the evenness of things with our crooked stick, but by the straightest rule that we can find. Thus St. Paul: *The law is spiritual, I am carnal.* Rom. vii. 14. He looks not how much he was more spiritual than other men, but how much less spiritual than the Law.

II. *I am the* LORD *thy God.*] That is the truest and most constant obedience, which flows jointly from reverence and love: these two are

the very wheels upon which obedience moves. And these first words of the Law, are most fit and powerful to work these two: *Jehovah* —sovereign Lord, to be feared and reverenced—*thy God;* and then, *Who have brought thee out, &c.*, who hath wrought such a deliverance for thee. Therefore, in both these respects, most worthy of the highest love.

This preface cannot stand for a commandment, as some would have it; for expressly it commands nothing, though by inference it enforceth all the commandments, and is indeed so intended. Though it may be conceived to have a particular tie with the First Commandment which follows it immediately, yet certainly, it is withal, a most fit preface to them all, and hath a persuasive influence into them all; commanding attention and obedience, not in the low way of human rhetoric, but *stylo imperatorio*, in a kingly phrase, becoming the majesty of *the King of kings—I am Jehovah.*

Here we have three motives to obedience: 1. His universal sovereignty, *Jehovah.* 2. His particular relation to His own people, *Thy God.* 3. The late singular mercy bestowed on them, *Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* Each of them sufficient, and therefore, altogether most strongly concluding, for obedience to His commandments.

1. *Jehovah.* Not to insist on the ample consideration of this name of God, of which divines, both Jewish and Christian, have said so much, some more cabalistically and curiously, others more soberly and solidly; this they agree in, That it is the incommunicable name of the Divine Majesty, and signifies the primitiveness of His being, and His eternity; that His being is not derived, but is in and from Himself; and that all other being is from Him; that He is from everlasting to everlasting in Himself, without any difference of time, but, as eternity is expressed to our conceiving, *He who is, and who was, and who is to come,* ALPHA *and* OMEGA.

Now, it is most reasonable, that seeing all things, mankind, and all the creatures that serve for his good, receive their being from Him, we should likewise receive laws from Him.

His majesty is alone absolute and independent: all the powers of the world, the greatest princes and kings, hold their crowns of Him, are His vassals, and owe obedience to His laws, as much as their meanest subjects, that I say not more, in regard to the particular obligation which their honour and eminency given them by Him, doth lay upon them.

Jehovah. What are the numerous styles wherein princes delight and glory so much, but a vain noise of nothing in comparison of His name, I AM? And in all their grandeur, they are low, petty majesties, when mention is made of this *Jehovah, who stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him.* Zech. xii. 1. What gives a man, when he gives all the obedience he can, and gives himself in obedience to God? What gives he Him, but what he hath first received from Him, and therefore owes it all, as soon as he begins to be?

This authority of the Lawgiver, is the very life of the Law. It is

that we so readily forget, and this is the cause of all disobedience, and therefore the Lord inculcates it often, Levit. xix. *I am the Lord*, ver. 31; and again repeated, ver. 37.

This is the Apostle St. James's argument, by which he strongly proves his conclusion. *That he that transgresseth in one, is guilty of all.* He urges not the concatenation of virtues in themselves—though there is truth and force in that: he that hath one hath all, and so he that wants any one hath none:—but the sameness of the authority is his medium; *For he who said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill.* Jam. ii. The authority is the same, and equal in all. The golden thread on which these pearls are stringed, if it be broken in any one part, it scatters them all. This name of God signifying His authority, keeps the whole frame of the Law together, and if that be stirred, it falls all asunder.

2. *Thy God.* Necessity is a strong but a hard argument, if it go alone. The sovereignty of God ties all, either to obey His law, or to undergo the punishment. But love is both strong and sweet. Where there sounds love in the Command, and in the relation of the Commander, there it is received and cheerfully obeyed by love. Thus then, *Thy God*, in covenant with thee, cannot but move thee.

We see, then, the Gospel interwoven with the Law, in *Thy God* often repeated, which is by the New Covenant, and that by a Mediator. God expects obedience from His peculiar people. It is their glory and happiness, that they are His. It adds nothing to Him, but much every way to them. He is pleased to take it as glory done to Him, to take Him to be our God; and doth really exalt and honour those that do so, with the title and privileges of *His people.* If His own children break His law, He cannot but take that worse.

3. *Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*] By the remembrance of their late great deliverance, He mollifies their hearts to receive the impression of this Law.

Herein was the peculiar obligation of this people. But ours, typified by this, is not less, but unspeakably greater; deliverance from the cruel servitude of sin, and the Prince of darkness. From these we are delivered, not to licentiousness and libertinism, but to true liberty, John viii. 36. *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.* Luke i. 74. *Delivered from the power of our enemies*—To what end? —*to serve Him without fear*, that terror which we should be subject to, if we were not delivered; and, *to serve Him all the days of our lives.* And that *all*, if many hundred times longer than it is, yet were too little for Him. It is not such a servitude as that of *Egypt*, from which we are delivered: that ended to each one with his life; but the misery from which we are redeemed, begins but in the fulness of it when life ends, and endures for ever.

The Gospel sets not men free to profaneness: no, it is a doctrine of holiness, *We are not called to uncleanness, but to holiness*, saith the Apostle. 1 Thess. iv. 7. He hath indeed taken off the hardness, the iron yoke, and now, *His commandments are not grievous.* 1 John v. 3. *His yoke is easy, and His burden light.* And they who are most sensible, and have most assurance of their deliverance, are ever the most active and fruitful in obedience: they feel themselves light and

nimble, having the heavy chains and fetters taken off. Psal. cxvi. 16. *Lord, I am Thy servant; Thou hast loosened my bonds.* And the comfortable persuasion of their redemption, is that *oil of gladness* which supples and disposes them to *run the way of God's commandments.*

PRECEPT I.

Thou shalt have no other Gods but ME.

THE first thing in religion is, to state the Object of it right, and to acknowledge and receive it for such. This, I confess, is the intent of this First Precept of the Law, which is therefore the basis and foundation that bears the weight of all the rest. And therefore, as we said before, though the preface looks to them all, yet it looks first to this which is nearest it, and is knit with it, and through it to all the rest. The preface asserted God's authority as the strength of His law, and this First Precept commands the acknowledgment and embracing of that His authority, and His alone, as God. And this is the spring of our obedience to all His commandments.

But before a particular explication of this, a word, first, of the *division* of this Law; secondly, of the *style* of it. 1. As to its *division*. That they were divided, first, into two tables, and then into ten words or commandments, none can question. We have the Lawgiver's own testimony clear for that. But about the particular way of dividing them into ten, and the matching of these two divisions together, there hath been, and still is, some difference. But this I will not insist on. Though Josephus, and Philo the Jew, would (to make the number equal) have five precepts in each table, yet, the matter of them is more to be regarded, and persuades the contrary; that those which concern *piety*, our duty to God, be in the first table, and those together in the second, which concern *equity*, or our duty to man. And the summary which our Saviour gives of the two tables, is evidently in favour of this. And that those precepts of *piety*, those of the first table, are *four*, and they of the second, *six*, and so, that the first and the second, as we have them, are different, and make two, and the tenth but one, hath the voice both of antiquity and reason; as many divines on the *decalogue* do usually evince at large, which, therefore, were as easy as it is needless to do over again. The creed of the Romish Church to the contrary, is plainly impudent presumption and partiality, choosing rather to blot out the law, than reform their manifest breach of it.

2. What I would say of the *style* of the Commandments, is but in this one particular, briefly: We see the greatest part of them are *prohibitive*, or, as we usually call them, though somewhat improperly, *negative*. *Thou shalt not* &c. This, as is observed by Calvin and others, intimates our natural bent and inclinement to sin, that it suffices not to show us what ought to be done, but we are to be held and bridled by countermands from the practices of ungodliness and unrighteousness.

Thou shalt not have, &c.] This order here—and so in the rest:

I. The scope. II. The sense of the words. III. What it forbids. IV. What it commands. And these follow each upon the other; for out of the scope, the sense is best gathered, and from that, the breach, and the observation.

I. The scope. As the Second Commandment concerns the solemn form of Divine worship, that it be not such as we devise, but such as Himself appoints; the Third, the qualification or manner of it, not vainly and profanely, but with holy reverence; the Fourth, the solemn time set apart for it, the sabbath; so, this First Precept aims at somewhat which is previous to all these.

Many distinguish this and the second, *per cultum internum et externum, by the internal and external worship;* and a grave modern divine, espying some defect in that, doth it, *per cultum naturalem et institutum, by natural and instituted worship.* But I confess, both omit, at least they express not, (it may be, they take it as implied,) that which is mainly intended, The Object of worship; that that Jehovah who gave and Himself spake this law, be received and acknowledged for The only True God, and so, the only object of Divine worship. And this is that which he calls *Cultus naturalis, natural worship,* that primitive worship, the religious habitude of man to God, giving himself entire, outward and inward, to His service and obedience; for this is no other than to own Him, and Him only, for that *Deity* to whom all love, and worship, and praise are due.

It is surely not so convenient to restrain this precept to inward worship only, for each precept binds the whole man to obedience; and therefore I would not give the first motions of concupiscence in general, for the sense of the Tenth Commandment, as we shall show when we come to speak of that. Certainly, even outward worship given to a false God, breaks this First Commandment.

The scope, then, is, briefly, That the Only True God be alone acknowledged for what He is, and, as we are able, with all our powers and parts, inwardly and outwardly, that He be answerably adored; that we neither change Him for any other, nor join any other with Him, nor be neglective and slack in honouring and obeying Him. So that, as we are particularly, by each several precept, instructed in, and obliged to, the particular duties of it, by this we are generally tied to give obedience to them all. It is no way inconvenient, but most fit in this general notion, that this First Commandment import the observance of itself, and of all the rest.

II. The sense of the words, *Non habebis*, Heb. *Non erunt tibi*, &c.

1. *Erit tibi Deus, Thou shalt have a God.* Know and believe that there is a Deity. 2. Seek to know which is The True God, that thou mayest acknowledge Him. 3. Know me as I have revealed Myself in My word. Know and believe that I, Jehovah, the Author and Deliverer of this Law that I am God, and there is none else. Isa. xliv. 8. 4. Offer not, therefore, either to forsake Me, or to join any other with Me. Alienate no part of My due from Me, for My glory I will not give unto another. 5. Take Me for thy God; and give service and honour, and thyself unto Me.

Before my face.] Set them not up in My sight, for I cannot suffer them, nor their worshippers. If they come in my sight, they will pro-

voke Me to anger. The word here for *face*, sometimes signifies *anger*, in Scripture; and it seems to allude to God's clear manifestation of Himself to His people in the delivery of the Law, and further to clear the doctrine of pure and true religion shining in the Law, which is, as it were, the light of the face of God. In which regard, the nations who knew Him not, may be said not to have had their gods before His face; for though He saw them, they saw not Him.

Again, *Before my face*, is as if He should say, If thine idolatry be never so secret, though it were but in heart, remember that it will be in My sight. Thou canst not steal away any of My glory to bestow any where else, so cunningly and secretly, but I shall espy thee. If thou canst have any other gods that I cannot know of and see not, thou mayest; but if thou canst have none but I shall see them, then beware, for if I see it, I will punish it.

III. *Breaches* or *sins*, against this Commandment. We cannot particularly name all, but some main ones.

1. That *inbred enmity*, that habitual rebellion which is in our natures against God; *συμφυὴς ἐχθρα*, that *connatural enemy* that takes life with us as soon as ourselves in the womb, —Τὸ *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, *the minding of the flesh*. Rom. viii. 6. And the evidence of that, is, *οὐκ ὑποτάσσεται*, *It cannot be ordered*, is ever breaking rank. Some even of those who bestow mourning upon sin, yet, do not often enough consider the bitter fountain, and bewail it. The wisest way to know things, is, following them home to their causes. Thus David, Psal. li. 5. *Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.*

2. *Atheism*. Though there is in the consciences of all men an indelible conviction of a Deity, so that there have been few of those monsters found, *professed atheists;* yet, there is in us all, naturally, this of atheism, that by nature we would willingly be rid of that light, and quench that sparkle if we could. And all ungodly men do live contrary to it, and fight against it.

3. *The gross idolatry of the Heathens;* their *πολυθεοτὴς*, making gods of beasts, almost of every thing, and beasts of themselves. *Nullus enim terminus in falso*. The writers of the primitive Church have mightily and learnedly confuted them: but we will not stir this *dunghill*. The Scripture calls idols so: *Hillulim*.

4. *Witchcraft*, necromancy and magical arts, which make a God of the devil.

5. Rome's *invocation of saints and angels*. Though they take never so much pains to clear it, they do but wash the blot more. Thus in the same matter, Jer. ii. 22. *Though thou take the nitre and much sope, yet, thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord*. All their apologies take it not away, let them refine it never so much with pamphlets and distinctions; all they attain by spinning it so fine, is but to make it a part of the *mystery of iniquity*.

6. *Erroneous opinions concerning God*, and, generally, heresies in religion.

7. *Practical or interpretative atheism*, or *idolatry*, whether of the two you will call it; for it is both in the lives of the most, and the world is full of this; being such as declares they have no God, or that

this God is but some base idol in His stead. Particularly, amongst ourselves, [1.] Gross ignorance of God, and no endeavour to attain the knowledge of Him, though in the midst of the light and means of knowing. [2.] Universal profaneness flowing from this ignorance. Hos. iv. 1, 2, 3. The hearts of men, which should be the temples of God, are full of idols. Though we hide them in the closest corners, they are before His face: He sees them, lust, and pride, and covetousness. See Ezek. viii. Consider, that which you bestow most thoughts and service on, that which you are most affectionate and earnest in, is not that your God? And is there not something beside the True God, that is thus deep in the hearts of the most of us? Take pains to make the comparison; look upon the temper of your minds. To say nothing of much more time spent upon other things than on Him, how ardent you are in other affairs which you think concern you near, and how cold in serving and honouring Him! But, though in particular undergods, in what serves their honour, they differ, all men naturally agree in the great idol, *Self*. Every man is by corrupt nature his own god. Was not this the first wickedness, which corrupted our nature, *Ye shall be as gods?* And it sticks to it still. Men would please themselves, and have themselves somebody, esteemed and honoured; and would have all serve to this end. Is not this God's right and due they give themselves, to be the end of all their own actions, and sacrifice all to their own glory?

IV. *What it commands.*

Now, by these we may easily gather the contrary, what is the obedience of this Commandment *. It is so to know the True God, this Jehovah, as to be persuaded sovereignly to love, and fear, and trust in Him, to serve and adore Him.

He is to be *feared*, for He is great. *Who would not fear Thee, Thou King of nations!* Jer. x. 7. To be *loved*, for He is good. And because both *great* and *good, only* fit to be *wholly* relied on and hoped in.

But love is all; it gives up the heart, and by that all the rest to the party loved; it is no more its own. Oh, that we could love Him! Did we see Him we should. It is His uncreated beauty which holds glorified spirits still beholding and still delighted. But we, because we know Him not, if we have any thoughts of Him, how short are they! Presently down again we fall to the earth, and into the mire ere we are aware. Therefore,

Set yourselves to know, and love, and worship this God. Labour that there may be less of the world, and less of yourselves, and more of God in your hearts; more settled and fixed thoughts of Him, and delight in Him. Think not that this is only for the learned, or only for some retired, contemplative spirits that have nothing else to do. He is the *Most High*, and service and honour are due to Him from all His creatures; and, from His reasonable creatures, reasonable service;

* Though the graces are duties properly belonging to the Commandment, some divines think fit to expatiate into the several common places of them, in explaining this Commandment; yet, (with all respect to them,) I think it not so fit to dwell upon each of these herein; their full handling rather belonging to that place of divinity which treats of the head of Sanctification and those infused habits of which it consists.

and what this is, hear from the Apostle, and let his exhortation, or his entreaty, persuade you to it. Rom. xii. 1: *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice,* (and they are not living without the soul,) *holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service;* and your truest obedience to this Commandment.

PRECEPT II.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth! Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

THE First Commandment binds us to acknowledge and worship the True God; this, to the true worship of that God.

As God is not known but by His own teaching and revealing Himself, so He cannot be rightly worshipped but by His own prescription and appointment. This is the aim of this Second Commandment, to bind up man's hands, and his working fancy that sets his hands at work, and to teach him to depend upon Divine direction for the rule of Divine worship, and to offer Him nothing in His service, but what he hath received from Him in command. The prohibition is general; *Non facias tibi,* Thou shalt not device any thing to thyself in the worship of God. And under that gross device of images, and worshipping them, expressly named, are comprehended all other inventions and will-worship.

There is in the words, I. The *Precept.* II. The *enforcement* of it.

I. The Precept. 1. *Thou shalt not make.* Thou shalt not imagine, nor invent, nor imitate the invention of others. Thou shalt not make, nor cause to make. In a word, thou shalt be no way accessary to the corrupting of Divine worship, with any *resemblance,* (or image,) or *human device* at all: the *former* is a particular word, signifying the then most usual kind of imagery; but the *other* of a most large and general sense, is put for all kinds of similitude and representation. So that the dispute the Church of Rome drives us into for her interest in this matter, about εἴδωλον and εἰκων, is not only a mere *logomachy,* a debate about words, but altogether impertinent and extravagant, having no ground at all in the words of the Commandment; the *former* whereof is more particular than either of these two, and the *latter* more general and comprehensive than either they or any one word we have to render it by.

Of the things which are in heaven, &c.] Because the vain mind of man had wandered up and down the world, and gone through all these places to find objects of idolatry; in heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars; on the earth, not only men, but beasts and creeping things, and fishes in the water, and made images of them to worship; the Lord is therefore particular in His countermand.

2. The second part of the Precept is concerning their worship: *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.*

The former word is more particular, specifying one usual sign or worship, the inclining, or *bowing*, of the body. The other, general: *Thou shalt not serve them:* i. e., Give them them no kind nor part of religious worship at all, on whatsoever pretence.

Here again the Popish writers make a noise with that distinction under which they think to shift the censure of idolatry. Call it what they will, λατρευειν or δουλευειν, surely, it comes under the word in the original, which signifies religious service or worship. Neither can they ever find in all the Scriptures, that any thing of that kind should be bestowed lower than upon the majesty of God himself.

This is then the tenor of the Commandment. [1.] That no image or representation of God be made at all: as is expressed in many other Scriptures, as giving the sense of this Precept. [2.] Nor that any resemblance of any creature be made for a religious use. [3.] That neither to any creature, nor to any resemblance or image, be given any part of Divine worship, although it were with a pretence, yea, and intention of worshipping the true God in and by them: which, if it were a sufficient excuse, as the Church of Rome dreams it is, certainly, the Israelites' golden calf, and many other the grossest idols that have been in the world, might come and find room to shelter under it.

II. *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.*] This follows the other part, as the binding on, or enforcing of the precept by threatening and promise annexed. Particularly, there be these *five* things by which God describes Himself here, to persuade obedience to this command: 1. His relation to His people—*Thy God.* 2. His power both to punish and reward—[*El.*] *The strong God.* 3. The exact regard He hath to His own glory and zeal, or jealousy for it—*A jealous God.* 4. The certainty and severity of His justice, punishing the transgressors of this His law on themselves and their posterity—*Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.* 5. The plenty and riches of His goodness to the obedient—*Shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me.*

This Commandment, and the Fourth are longer than the rest, and more backed with argument, because the light of nature discerns less in these than in the rest; viz., the outward manner of the worship of God, and God's exactness in that, to be served not as we will, but as He Himself sees fit, and concerning the time of it.

Of the first argument, from God's relation to His people, we heard before in the Preface. Here it is repeated, because it suits with the word that follows *Jealous.* 1. *Thy God*—thy Husband by particular covenant, and therefore jealous of thy love and fidelity to Me and My worship. 2. *El*—able to right Myself upon the mightiest and proudest offender. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?* says the Apostle. *Are we stronger than He?* 1 Cor. x. 22; there joining these two together, as here they are, His *strength* and His *jealousy.* 3. *Jealous*—He is the Lord and Husband of His people, and idolatry is therefore spiritual adultery; as they are often reproached with it under that name, by the prophets, Jer. iii. 1, *&c.* So that by that sin particularly, His anger is stirred up against them. The very contract of this marriage with His people we have, Exod. xix. 5.

Visiting—As judges and magistrates use to visit those places that are under their jurisdiction, to make inquiry after abuses committed in time of their absence, and to punish them. 1 Sam. vii. 16. Thus, He who is always every where alike present, yet, because he doth not speedily punish every sin at the first, therefore, when he doth execute judgment in His appointed time, then is He said to *visit*, and *search*, and *find* out that iniquity which, in His time of forbearance, He seemed to the ungodly, either not to see, or not to regard.

The iniquities of the fathers upon the children.] It is true, the Prophet, correcting the perverse speech of the people of his time, affirms, (Ezek. xviii. 20,) that *the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*, &c., to wit, he repenting and returning, and being no way culpable of the like iniquity, which the people then falsely presumed of themselves. But neither is it here said, that the godly children shall suffer for the sin of their ungodly parents or ancestors; but, because this sin of idolatry, or false worship in any kind, doth as commonly and readily descend to posterity, as any other, and there is scarcely any plea for false religion that takes more than, *It was the religion of our forefathers*, this kind of threatening may possibly for that cause be here particularly suitable.

But surely that is not all that is here intended, that if the children do continue in the sin of the parents, they shall be punished; but, that for so high a transgression as this, He may justly, and often doth in judgment, give the children over to the sins of their parents. His grace being free, and so, not being bound to His creature to furnish grace but where He will, they go on in the sin of their fathers, and bring upon themselves further punishment, not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal. It is not necessary for its verifying, that it be always so; for God, we know, hath converted many children of ungodly, yea, particularly, of idolatrous parents, and shewed them mercy; but in that He justly may do thus, it is a just threatening, and in that He often doth thus, it is a true threatening, although in mercy He deal otherwise where it pleaseth Him.

That hate me.] What! this is so harsh a word, that nobody will own it; not the most dissolute and wicked, not the grossest idolaters. Yet, generally, the love of sin witnesses against men possessed with it, that they are, Θεοστυγεῖς, haters of God. And particularly the love of idols and false worship, alienates the soul from God, and turns it to enmity against Him. Men seem, possibly, to themselves, in false worship, humble and devout (Col. ii. 18); but it is to hate and dishonour the Divine majesty, to bring to Him, and force upon Him, as it were, in His own presence, in His immediate service, that which is most hateful to Him.

Shewing mercy to thousands.] Blessing them and their posterity, being their God, and the God of their seed. *Of them that love me and keep my commandments.* Who therefore obey me, because they love me, and testify they love me, by obeying me. This is a general truth, in regard of all the Commandments, though more particularly to be applied to this to which it is annexed.

This Commandment forbids, 1. The making of any image or resemblance of God at all. Deut. iv. 15. *Ye saw no manner of similitude,*

says Moses, *on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb.* So, Isa. xl. 25. *To whom will ye liken Me?*

2. The giving of any kind of religious honour and worship to any creature or created resemblance. Job xxxi. 27. Psalm cxv. The reason why men are so prone to both these, is, because they are so much addicted to sense, and their minds are so blinded, that they cannot conceive of the spiritual nature of God. Therefore, being driven by conscience to some kind of worship and religion, they incline to have some visible object of it: the soul having lost its sight, leans upon the body, would make it up, and supply it by the eye of sense.

3. All superstition and *will-worship*, all self-pleasing ceremonies and inventions in the service of God. How pompous, and plausible, and devout soever they seem to be, instead of decoring, they do indeed deface the native beauty of Divine worship; and, as Popish pictures on glass windows, they may seem rich and gay, but they darken the house; they keep out the light of saving truth, and obscure the spiritual part of the service of God.

4. All gross, material conceits, and apprehensions of God. Other particulars of prohibition may be reduced to this command; for this and the rest name but the main offences and duties.

Then it commands,

1. To learn, and carefully, and punctually to observe, the prescription of God in every part of His own worship, and diligently to be exercised in it, as in hearing, prayer, sacrament, *&c.*

2. In worshipping Him, to have the purest spiritual notion of His majesty that we are able to attain to.

God deals by representing both His justice and His mercy to persuade His people to obedience; to drive them by fear of the one, and draw them by the sweetness of the other. Thus, pastors are to set both before their people. But as He delights most in the pressing of His mercy, and persuading by that, so, certainly, it is that which prevails most with His own children, and doth most kindly melt and mould their hearts to His obedience.

Shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.] Although it be not perfect, yet, it is such a *keeping* of His commandments as flows from *love*, and therefore love makes up what is wanting in it; and *that* is not perfect, neither, in us here, and therefore, *mercy* makes up what is wanting in both. It is not such love and obedience as can plead for reward upon merit, but such as stands in need of mercy; and it is free grace and mercy that rewards it.

Love me and keep my commandments. These two are inseparable. No keeping the Commandments without love; no love without keeping them. Try, then, the one by the other—the sincerity of your obedience by examining the spring of it, whether it arises from love; and try the reality of your love, whether it be active and fruitful in obedience.

You know how studious love is to please, how observant of their will whom it affects, preferring it to their own will, and desirous to have no will but the same: it makes hard things easy, and cannot endure to have any thing called difficult to it. Much love to God would

do this; it would turn all duty into delight. Did we once know what this were, we should say with Augustine, *What needs threatening and punishment to those who love Thee not? Is it not punishment enough, not to love Thee?* If you would have all your obedience sweet and easy to yourselves, and acceptable to God, seek, above all things, hearts inflamed with His love.

PRECEPT III.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless, that taketh His name in vain.

THE Psalmist stirring up himself to the praises of God, Psal. lvii. 8, calls up his glory to it. *Awake, my glory.* By *glory*, the Hebrew interpreters understand the *soul;* the *Septuagint* and others, the *tongue;* so, the Apostle, following the *Septuagint*, renders it, from Psalm xv., Acts ii. 26. It suits well with both: the soul being the better part of man, far excelling the body; and, amongst the parts of the body, the tongue having this excellency, to be the organ of speech, and so, the interpreter of the mind: and this difference from the beasts, as the soul is, may well partake of this honourable name, and be called man's *glory*.

But that which gives them both best title to that name, is that exercise to which he calls them, the praising and glorifying of their Lord and Maker. Then are they indeed our *glory*, when they are so taken up and employed; when the one conceives, and the other utters His glory.

And as it becomes them always to be one, as they have one name, the soul and the tongue to agree, so, especially, should this one name given them be answered by their harmony and agreement in his own work, for which chiefly they have that name, in giving glory to God. And it is that which this Commandment requires; forbidding that which is the ignominy of man, both of his soul and of his tongue, and which degrades them, turns them out of the name of *glory*, to be called *shame* and *dishonour;* that is, irreverence, and the dishonouring of the glorious Name of GOD; and therefore, on the contrary, commanding the reverent and holy use of His Name and service, and that we always endeavour so to speak and think of Him, and so to walk before Him, as those that speak beyond all things that His name may be glorified in us and by us. For, though false swearing and vain swearing are main breaches of this Commandment, (as we shall shew afterwards,) being primarily forbidden by it, yet, it extends generally to all our speeches concerning God. Neither is it to be restrained there, and kept within that compass, as if it gave only law to the tongue; although, indeed, the tongue hath a very great share in it, both in the breaking and the keeping of it: yet, certainly, the Precept in its full sense, goes deeper into the soul, and gives a rule to the speech of the mind, our *thoughts* concerning God; and larger, stretches itself forth to our actions and life, which hath as loud a voice, to those with whom we converse, as our tongues, and is the more considerable of the two,—giving a truer character of men, what they are indeed, than their words can do.

The First Commandment teaches and enjoins *whom* we shall worship. The Second, *what* worship we shall give Him. This Third shews us with what disposition and intention, and answerably with what manner of expression, we shall worship Him and use His name; that it be not vainly, and after a common, trivial manner, but in holiness and humility, and in desire of His glory.

So then, this Commandment concerns particularly that which is the great end of all the works of God, *The glory of His name.* He *made all things for Himself,* (Prov. xvi. 4), His works of creation for this end (Isa. xliii. 7); those of redemption, and His new creation of the elect world, all *to the praise of His glory.* Eph. i. 12. And for this end calls He us *from darkness to light,* to *shew forth His praises* or virtues. 1 Pet. ii. 9. This we are to intend with him; and this Precept requires of us, that what He aimed at in all His works, the same we may intend in all ours. And this is an excellent thing, the holiest and happiest condition, to make God's purpose ours, and have the same end with Him. Here it is particularly true, *Summa religionis est imitari quem colis: The main of religion is, to imitate Him whom we worship.* Thus are we to live, and particularly, so to worship Him and make mention of His name, that we be ever sensible of its worth and greatness, and so beware that we indignify it not, but always seek to advance the honour and glory of it. And that is the very scope of this Commandment.

There is in it, I. The *Precept* itself. II. The annexed *Commination.*

In the *Precept,* consider, 1. What is His *Name.* 2. What it is, to *take* it. What, to take it *in vain.*

The Name.] That is, [1.] the names that are given Him in Scripture, *Jehovah, Elohim,* &c. It was a foolish and profane shift of the Jews, who thought themselves free if they abused not the name JEHOVAH; and so they became superstitious in the forbearing of that, and licentious in the abuse of the rest, and in swearing by other things in heaven and earth, &c. Which, therefore, our Saviour reproves, giving the true sense of this Commandment, Matt. v. 34. And this is the nature of superstition, to make frivolous, undue restraints, by way of compensation for that profane liberty and looseness in the commandments of God, which is its usual companion. [2.] All the attributes of God, by which the Holy Scriptures set Him forth to us. [3.] Generally, any thing whatsoever by which God is made known unto us, and distinguished from all others, and by which we make mention of Him, which are the uses of a *name.* In a word, that of St. Paul expresseth it fully and fitly, Τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Thou shalt not take.] That is, Thou shalt not take, or lift up, or bear. [1.] Not use it secretly by thyself, or within thyself, in thine own thoughts, without reverence; not take it in vain. So, [2.] Not make mention of it, or express it to others, vainly; not lift up in vain. [3.] Not bear, not be called by it, or have it called upon thee; not profess it in vain.

In vain.] That is, [1.] Falsely and dissimulately. [2.] Profanely. [3.] Unprofitably, to no person. [4.] Lightly and inconsiderately, without due regard and holy fear.

II. The annexed *Commination.*

He will not hold him guiltless.] He will not clear him. The Sovereign Judge, from whose hand no offender can escape, except He willingly set him free and absolve him. He will not absolve them who abuse His name. And it means further, He will not clear him; that is, He will certainly punish him, and do judgment on him as guilty. And this is the rather particularly here expressed, because men are subject foolishly to promise themselves impunity in this sin, thinking either that there remains no guiltiness behind it, but it passes as the words do; or, if there be any, yet, being but a matter of words, wherein the most usual and known breach of this Command consists, that the guiltiness of them is so small, that any little excuse may wipe it off; that it is but inadvertence, or a bad custom, or some such thing. No, says the Lord, the Law-giver himself, delude not yourselves; think not the honour and dishonour of My Name a light matter; or, if you will, yet I will not think it so, nor shall you find it so: though you easily forgive and clear yourselves, I will not clear you, but will vindicate the glory of My Name in your just punishment, which your sin of taking it in vain did abuse and dishonour, and you shall feel in that punishment that you are not guiltless, as you imagined. The Name of God is *great*, and *weighty*, and *honourable*, (as the same Hebrew word signifies both,) and therefore, *qui assumunt vel attollunt*, as the same word here is—they who offer to *lift up* this weighty Name lightly and regardlessly, it shall fall upon them, and they shall be crushed under the weight of it.

There are many questions relating to this Commandment, handled and discussed by divines, as, of an oath, a vow, &c., which, for our purposed brevity, we will pass by; and only, according to our usual method, add some chief heads of the violation and the observance of this Commandment.

It forbids, 1. All false swearing or perjury, which is to *take His name* after the grossest manner *in vain*, or, *in mendacium*, as the word likewise signifies; to call Truth itself, the First Verity, to partake of a lie. But He *is not mocked;* for as the nature of an oath imports invocating Him as the highest both witness and judge of truth, and punisher of falsehood, He always, in His own due time, makes it good on those who dare adventure upon that guiltiness in so high a sin.

2. Papal dispensation of oaths, which is a most heinous sin, and becomes *him* who is eminently called *The man of sin*. It is more than perjury; for it is a professed, avowed patrociny of perjury, together with an impudent conceit of a privilege and right to do so.

3. Equivocatory oaths, by which, if it were lawful, the grossest perjury might be defended; for there is nothing so false, but some mental reservation may make it true.

4. Abusing the name and the word of God to charms and spells.

5. Execration and cursing by the name of Satan, which is no other than invocating him.

6. Swearing by any creature.

7. Abusing and vilifying the glorious and holy name of God, by passionate, or by vain and common, customary swearing.

8. Swearing for ends of controversy, and in weighty matters, where an oath is lawful, yea, necessary, yet doing it without due reverence

and consideration of the greatness of God and the nature of an oath.

9. The abasing of the word of God, either wresting it to defence of error, or making sport and jesting with it.

10. Scoffing and taunting at holiness and the exercises of religion.

11. Dishonouring the religion which we profess, by unworthy and unsuitable carriage of life.

12. Performing prayer, or any other religious exercise, only out of custom, without affection and delight, and holy regard of the presence and majesty of God in His worship.—More might be added, which for brevity we omit.

Is it not the highest shame of Christians, to take pleasure to vilify and abuse that holy Name of God, which saints and angels are blessing above, and which we hope (as we pretend) to bless with them for ever? If any dare offer to excuse it by provocation or passion, who otherwise use it not; consider, what a madness this is, because man hath injured thee, thou wilt injure God, and be avenged upon His name for it? And you who plead custom, accurse yourselves more deeply: that tells, you are guilty of long continuance in, and frequent commission of, this horrible sin. Were the fear of God in men's hearts, it would prevail both above their passion and their custom. Did they believe this, that the Lord will not clear them in His great day, it would fright them out of their custom. Were there a law made, that whosoever were heard swear, should be put to death, you would find a way to break your custom. God threatens eternal death, and you fear not, because indeed you believe not.

It commands, 1. Generally the reverend and holy use of the Name of God, and, particularly in case of necessity, by advised and religious swearing by His name, and His alone, in judgment, truth, and righteousness. 2. To consider His name often, to take it into our thoughts, to meditate on His glorious attributes, and on His words and works, in both which those attributes shine forth unto us. 3. To delight to make mention of His name upon all fit occasions, and to speak to His glory. 4. To adorn our holy profession of religion with a holy life, with wise and circumspect walking, that it may not be evil spoken of by our means. 5. That our heart and affection be in the service of God which we perform; otherwise how plausible soever the appearance and outside of it is, it is nothing but guiltiness within, a *taking of His name in vain*, who *will not hold him guiltless* who does so. 6. Above all exercises, to delight in the praises of God, which is most properly the exalting and magnifying of His name, the lifting it up on high. The Psalmist abounds in commending it: It is *good*, it is *comely*, it is *pleasant*. Oh! that we could resolve with him, Psal. xxxiv. 1, 2: *I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be in my mouth continually. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* This is, as we can, to bear a part here with glorified spirits; and a certain pledge to us, that, after a few days, we shall be admitted into their number.

PRECEPT IV.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

AMONGST all the visible creatures, it is man's peculiar excellency, that he is capable of considering and worshipping his Maker, and was made for that purpose; yet, being composed of the dust of the earth and the breath of God, a body and a soul, the necessities of that meaner part, while we are in this life, employ as much, and take up a great part of our little time. And in this regard, God hath wisely and graciously set apart a day for us, one of each seven, to be appropriate to that our highest employment, the contemplating and solemn worshipping of His Majesty. This is the scope of this Precept. Consider,

I. The Precept itself. II. The reason of it, and motive to its obedience. The Precept itself is first briefly expressed; and then, further explained and urged.

Remember.] This word used, seems, 1. To reflect upon by-past omission and forgetfulness. For, though it was instituted in paradise, and was not now a new unheard-of thing to this people, as appears by Exod. xvi. 23, yet, it is like they were much worn out of the observation and practice of it, especially during the time of their captivity in Egypt. So then, it is renewed thus: Keep holy this day which you know was so long ago appointed to be so—Be not now any more unmindful and regardless of it. 2. Such a way of enjoining seems more particularly needful in this than in the rest, because it is not so written in nature as the rest, but depends wholly upon particular institution, which may also be the cause why it is so large, and the form of it alone, amongst all the ten, both negative and positive. *Thou shalt do no work*, and, *Remember to keep it holy.* 3. But the main reason of this *Remember*, is, the main thing or aim in this Precept, as both the badge, and the preserver and increaser of all piety and religion. And therefore is it, that it is so often pressed in the books of the Law, and in the sermons of the Prophets to the people of God, and so often called a sign of God's covenant with them, and their mark of distinction from all other people. Exod. xxiii. 12, and xxxi. 13, 14. Levit. xix. 30; xxv. 2, &c. Jer. xvii. Isa. lviii, 13, 14, &c.

The Sabbath-day.] It is called a day of rest, from the beginning and original of its institution, God's rest; and from the end of its institution, man's rest; both which follow in the words of the Command: the one is the example and enforcing reason of the other.

That thou keep holy.] God sanctified it by instituting it, and man sanctifies it by observing it according to that institution.

This sanctifying is, [1.] In cessation from earthly labour. [2.] In their stead, to be wholly possessed and taken up with spiritual exercise, both in private and in public. The former is necessary for the being of the latter; that cessation, for this work; and the latter is necessary for the due being of the former: we cannot be vacant and entire for

spiritual service, unless we cease from bodily labour; and this cessation or resting from bodily labour, cannot be a sanctifying of this day unto God, unless it be accompanied with spiritual exercise.

In the following words, that part only is expressed, the rest or abstinency from work; but the other is supposed as the end of this,—that they shall not do their own works, that they may attend upon God's, His solemn worship. And this is implied in that word, *It is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;* both of His own appointing, and for this end, this work, that He may be more solemnly worshipped. And likewise, the *antithesis* that seems to be in that word, *In six days thou shalt do all thy work*, imports, that on the seventh thou shalt do *God's*. Not so called, that any benefit arises to Him by our service; no, our *goodness reaches Him not at all.* Psal. xvi. 2. In that way, that worship, which is far above ours, that of the angels, can add nothing to Him, for He is infinite. Even this work, Sabbath-work, and all our prayers and praises offered to Him, and all performances of His worship, they are *our* works, in respect of the gain and advantage of them; it comes all back to us. But His worship is *His* work *objectively*, He is the object of it; and *directively*, by particular prescription from Himself; and, if you will add, *effectively* too, never done aright but by His own grace and assistance.

Six days shalt thou labour.] The command of due labour and diligence in our particular callings, is not of this place; it belongs properly to the Eighth precept, and in some way, to the Seventh: here, it is only mentioned premissively, and for illustration of this duty here enjoined. And further, there is under it a motive from abundant equity: seeing that God hath made the proportion thus, not pinched to us, but dealt very liberally in the time granted for our own work, what gross, not impiety only, but iniquity and ingratitude will it be, to encroach upon that small part He hath nominated and set apart for His service! This was a great aggravation of our first parent's first sin, that having the free use of all the trees in the garden besides, they would not bate that one which was forbidden them, in homage and obedience to Him who had given them all the rest, and given them themselves, who a little before were nothing.

Thou shalt labour six days.] Not so as in them to forget and take no notice of God, nor at all to call upon Him and worship Him, and think to acquit all by some kind of attendance on Him on the Sabbath. They who do so, are most unsanctified themselves, and therefore, cannot sanctify the Sabbath to God. Such profane persons do profane and pollute all they touch with their foul hands, for such be all profane hands lifted up to God in prayer. The life of the godly is not a visiting of God only in His house on this day, but a daily and constant walking with God in our own houses, and in all our ways, making both our houses and our hearts, His houses, His temples, where He may dwell with us, and we may offer Him our daily sacrifices.

Only, the peculiar of *this* day is, that we may not divide it betwixt Heaven and Earth, but it shall be wholly for the service of God, and no work at all to have place in it that may hinder that, and suits not with the sanctifying of it: for so we are to understand the word, *No manner of work.*

Neither thou nor thy servant, &c.] As each one is obliged personally, so, they who have command of others, are bound to bind them to observance of the Precept, and the cattle to rest, because their labour is for man's use, and therefore, his resting infers theirs; as, likewise, their rest is for a passive conformity, that man may see nothing round about him, but what may incite to the observance of this day; which was the reason, in solemn fasts, of the beast's fasting likewise, for man's further humiliation. The *stranger*, if converted and professing their religion, the same reason for him as for all others within a man's house; and if a stranger to their religion too, yet they might, and ought, as is here commanded, oblige him to this part of outward conformity, cessation from work, which otherwise would be an offensive and scandalous sight; and withal, if they did any work for those with whom they dwelt, their share would be deeper in the sin, than of such a stranger not professing their religion.

For in six days.] It is not pertinent here to speak of the reason of this, why God made six days' work of that which He could have done in one instant. Here, it is only urged exemplarily, as the reason why God did sanctify this day, and why *we* should sanctify it. His rest, you know, is not of weariness, or at all of ceasing from motion, for *He faints not, neither is wearied*, as He tells us by the prophet, Isa. xl. 28; yea, He moves not at all in working. *Omnia movet ipse immotus:* All things, Himself unmoved, are moved by Him. But this *rest* is this; that this was the day that immediately followed the perfecting of the Creation; and therefore, God blessed it with this privilege, (that is the blessing of it,) that it should be to men, holy, for the contemplation of God and of His works, and for solemn worship to be performed to Him.

All the other precepts of this Law remaining in full force in their proper sense, it cannot but be an injury done to this Command, either flatly to refuse it that privilege, or, which is little better, to evaporate it into allegories. Nor was the day abolished as a typical ceremony, but that seventh only changed to a seventh still, and the very next to it; He who is *Lord of the Sabbath*, either himself immediately, or by his authority in his apostles, appointing that day of his resurrection for *our* sabbath, adding to the remembrance of the first creation, the memorial of accomplishing the new creation, the work of our redemption, which appeared then manifestly to be perfected, when our Redeemer broke the chains of death, and arose from the grave; he who is the light of the new world, shining forth anew the same day that light was made in the former creation. This day was St. John, *in the Spirit*, taken up with those extraordinary revelations. Rev. i. 10. They were extraordinary indeed. And certainly, every Christian ought to be *in the Spirit*, in holy meditations and exercises on this day, more than the rest; winding up his soul, which the body poises downwards, to a higher degree of heavenliness;—ought to be particularly careful to bring a humble heart to speak to God in prayer, and hear Him in His word, a heart breathing after Him, longing to meet with Himself in His ordinances. And certainly, it is safer and sweeter to be thus affected towards *the Lord's day*, than to be much busied about the debate of the change.

The very life of religion doth much depend upon the solemn observation of this day. Consider, if we should intermit the keeping of it but for one year, to what a height profaneness would rise in those who fear not God, who yet are restrained, though not converted, by the preaching of the word, and their outward partaking of public worship. Yea, those who are most spiritual, would find themselves losers by the intermission.

What forbidden.—1. Bodily labour on this day, where necessity unavoidable, or piety, commands not. 2. Sporting and pastimes*. This is not to make it a sabbath to God, but to our lusts and to Satan; and hath a stronger antipathy with the worship of God, and that temper of mind they intend in it, than the hardest labour. 3. Resting from these, but withal, resting from the proper work of this day, neglecting the worship of God in the assemblies of His people. The beasts can keep it thus, as we see in the Precept. 4. Resorting to the public worship of God, but in a customary, cold way, without affection and spiritual delight in it. 5. Spending the remainder of the day incongruously, in vain visits and discourses, &c.

How observed.—1. By pious remembrance of it, and preparation, sequestering not only the body from the labour, but our souls from the cares and other vain thoughts of the world. 2. Attending upon the public worship of God willingly and heartily, as the joy and refreshment of our souls. Isa. lviii. Psal. cxxii. 3. Spending the remainder of it in private, holily; as much as may be, in meditation of the word preached, and conference, in prayer, reading, and meditating on the great works of God, of creation, redemption, &c.

This is the loveliest, brightest day in all the week to a spiritual mind. These *rests* refresh the soul in God, that finds nothing but turmoil in the creature. Should not this day be welcome to the soul, that sets it free to mind its own business, which is on other days to attend the business of its servant, the body? And these are a certain pledge to it of that expected freedom, when it shall enter to an eternal sabbath, and rest in Him for ever, who is the only rest of the soul.

PRECEPT V.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

THE renewed image of God in man, or *the new man*, is made up of *holiness and righteousness*. Eph. iv. 24. These two are that of which the whole Law of God is the rule: the first Table, the rule of holiness or piety towards God; the second, of righteousness or equity towards men. And of the commandments which concern the latter, the first aims at the preserving of that order which God hath appointed in the several relations of superiors and inferiors; that is the scope of this Fifth Commandment.

Daily experience teacheth us how needful this is, that God should give a particular precept concerning this; in that we see how few there

* Sabb. vituli aurei.

are who know aright, either how to command and bear rule as superiors, or as inferiors, to obey and be subject. And there is one evil very natural to men, which misleads them in both, pride and self-opinion, which often makes superiors affect excess in commanding, and inferiors defective in due obedience.

Observe the order: it hath the first place in the second Table: 1st. As being the rule of order and society amongst men, which is needful for the better observing of all the rest. And, 2dly, as in all authority, there is a particular resemblance of God, therefore it is fitly placed next to those precepts that contain our duty to Himself. He is pleased to use that interchange of names with superiors which testifies this resemblance; not only to take theirs to Himself, to be called a *father*, a *master*, a *king*, &c., but to communicate His own name to them, and call them *gods*. And where the Aposle speaks of God as the *Father of Spirits*, he draws a reason from that obedience we owe to *the fathers of our flesh*, as the subordinate causes of our being. Heb. xii. 9.

There is in the words, I. The *Precept*. II. The *Promise*. And it is called by the Apostle, *The first Commandment with promise*. Eph. vi. 2. For the last clause of the Second Commandment, though it imply a promise, yet, as is usually observed, it is general to the keeping of all the Commandments; whereas this is appropriate. But again, *that* is a promise of mercy in general, *this*, of one particular blessing. Further, that it is not formally a promise, though it implies one indeed, and is intended so; but it is set down by way of description of God, from His mercy and bounty to those who keep His precepts; as the clause foregoing it, expresses His justice in punishing the rebellious.

Honour.] Under this is comprehended whatsoever is due to superiors, by virtue of that their station and relation to us: inward respectful thoughts and esteem of them, and the outward expression and signifying of it by the usual signs of honour, and by obedience and gratitude, *&c.*

Thy father, &c.] This relation is named for all the rest, as being the first and most natural; and also, as being the sweetest and most affectionate superiority, and therefore, the fittest to regulate the command of superiors, and to persuade inferiors to obedience. Magistrates are fathers for men's civil good in their societies and dwelling together; ministers, fathers for their spiritual good and society as Christians.

That thy days may be long in the land.]—That it is said, *Which the Lord thy God shall give thee*, is peculiar to that people to whom this Law was first delivered; but the substance of the promise being common, extends to all together with the precept.

This blessing of length of days, is particularly fit for the duty; that they who honour their parents, who are the second causes of their life, should be blessed with long life.

This, as all other promises of temporal things, is ever to be taken with that condition without which they might change their quality, and prove rather punishments; but God always bestows them on His own, and therefore, ought to be understood so to promise them, in so

far as they are fit for them, and may be truly good in their particular enjoyment, and as they conduce to a greater good.

It forbids—1. All disobedience in inferiors to the just commands of those whom God hath placed in authority above them; stubbornness and rebellion in children against their parents, or despising and disesteem of them for their meanness in body, or mind, or estate. The precept is not, honour thy parents for their riches, or wisdom, or comeliness; but, honour them as thy parents, and because they are so. Against this command is all other disobedience or refractoriness of those who owe obedience; wives to their husbands, servants to their masters, people to their pastors, &c.

2. Superiors break it, when they abuse their authority to serve their pride. Their screwing it too high, is very unpleasant, a particular dishonour to God, and defaces the resemblance they have of Him: it spoils their harmony, as a string too high wound up; and besides that, it is very dangerous, being the ready way to break it. As in magistracy and public government, tyranny is most observable, so there is petty tyranny in masters and parents, and husbands, in extreme harshness and bitterness, μὴ πικραίνετε, says the Apostle, &c. Again, the precept is broken, when superiors walk unworthily, and so divest themselves of that honour which belongs to them.

It commands—First, That children give due respect and obedience to their parents; and that all who are subject to the authority of others, though they have not suitable deserving, give it to their station, in obedience to God who commands. For though they, personally considered, do not, yet certainly God deserves our obedience. And it is so much the purer to Him, when, other incitements failing, yet we observe that which fails not at all.

All obedience to men is limited thus, that it be *in the Lord*, and with regard to His supremacy; and therefore, no authority can oblige to the obedience of any command that crosses His. Authority is primitively and originally in God, and He gives not His glory to another. He gives not away any of His peculiar authority to man, but substitutes Him; and our first tie is to God, as His creatures, and this is universal. The greatest kings are His vassals, and owe Him homage, and no authority derived from Him, can free us from that which we owe to Himself. There is a straight line of subordination, and if superiors leave this, we are to adhere to it, looking directly to God, keeping our station. Some of the schoolmen think that the inferior angels therefore fell with the chief in their apostacy, because they looked so much upon him, that they considered him not in subordination to God, and so, *left their station*, as the Apostle speaks, Jude 6.

Secondly, The duty of all superiors is, 1. To consider that their higher station is not for themselves, and for their own advantage, but for those who are in subjection to them: as the stars are set in the highest place, but are for the benefit of the inferior world, by their light and heat and influence: *Let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth.* Gen. i. 15. 2. Let them always remember, to command *in God* and *for Him*; to prefer His honour to their own; and seeing He gives command concerning

theirs, that they make it serviceable for the advancing of His. For, to this purpose hath He given them authority, and given command that they be honoured; and His promise is, to *honour those that honour Him, but they that despise Him, shall be despised.* 1 Sam. ii. 30. This many superiors have felt, because they would not believe it and take notice of it.

Would parents teach their children to know God, and honour and obey Him, this were the surest and most effectual way to make them obedient children to them. If they teach them to obey God, you see, He commands them to obey their parents; and therefore, in obedience to Him, they will do so.

PRECEPT VI.

Thou shalt not kill. Or, Thou shalt do no murder.

The world was at first perfect harmony, but sin made the breach at which discord entered, enmity betwixt God and man, and enmity betwixt man and man. As the sin that hath poisoned man's nature makes him a rebel to God, so it makes men tigers and wolves one to another: and that same Serpent that at first envenomed our nature, doth still hiss on wretched men, both to disobedience against God, and enmity and cruelty against one another. We see how soon this evil followed upon the former: the first parents disobeyed God, and the first children, the one killed the other. In opposition to this evil, God hath given this to be one of His Ten Precepts, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Having given a rule touching the particular relations of men, the following commandments of the second Table concern the general duties of all men one to another; and this Sixth regardeth his being or life.

Not kill.] This ties not up the sword of justice, which is in the magistrate's hand, from punishing offenders, even with death those that deserve it; but rather calls for the use of it, *not being to be carried in vain,* as the Apostle says, Rom. xiii. 4: not a gilt sword only for shew, but to be drawn and wielded for the execution of justice; both that in the just punishment of sin, [Κόλασις,] the sinner may eat of the fruit of his own ways, and so, God the Supreme Judge and Fountain of justice may be honoured, [Τιμωρια,] and that by that example, [Παραδειγμα,] others may be terrified from the like offences. And thus, just killing by the sword of the magistrate, is a main means of the observing of this Commandment amongst men, *Thou shalt not kill.*

By the like reason is just war likewise freed from the breach of this Commandment. But,

The scope of the Precept being the preservation and safety of the life of man, and guarding it from violence, it is evident that all injury to our neighbour's life, our own not excluded, is *forbidden;* and not only the heinous fault of murder, which human laws do punish, but all the seeds and beginnings of this sin in the heart, to which principally, as the fountain of our actions, the spiritual law of God is given;

as the authentic interpretation of our Saviour teacheth, Matt. v., and particularly touching this Commandment, ver. 21, &c.

1. All fixed hatred of our brethren is forbidden, as the highest degree of heart-murder. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.* Levit. xix. 17. And *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* 1 John iii. 15; and he adds, *Ye know that no murderer hath life eternal abiding in him.* So then, he is in a woful deadly condition, in whose heart this hatred dwells. This is an infernal kind of fire, like your fires under ground, that cannot be quenched. So far is it from the temper of any truly spiritual and heavenly mind, to be subject to it, there is not any thing more contrary to the Spirit of God, and the work of His grace, than the spirit of malice. And although it never break forth to revenge, yet, if the heart rejoice when evil befals those it dislikes, although it come from another hand, God accounts it as if he who is glad at it, had inflicted it and been the worker of it. Therefore Job protests thus, that he *rejoiced not at the destruction of him that hated him, nor lift up his soul when evil found him.* Job xxxi. 29.

2. Rash anger, either that which is altogether without just cause, or which, upon some just cause, arises to an undue measure. And is not this the ordinary disease of the greatest part,—an habitual bitterness of spirit, that is put out of its seat and troubled with every trifling cause, peevishly stirred up with the shadow and imagination of a wrong, where none is done?

3. The vent of these passions of envy and hatred, or sudden rash anger, by railing, and strife, and bitter speakings, by scoffs and taunts, by whisperings and detraction, which are the common exercise of base and unworthy spirits.

This commandment *requires* that, to the avoiding and forbearance of all injury to the life of our neighbour, we add a charitable disposition and desire of preserving it, and do accordingly act that charity to our utmost power, to the good and comfort of his life; using towards him meekness and patience, clemency and beneficence; doing him good, supplying his wants, as we are able. For it is cruelty to the life of our poor brethren, to be straight-handed towards them in the day of their necessity and our abundance, at least, of our comparatively better estate. 1 John iii. 17.

But we think we do much this way, when, upon right trial, we should find ourselves exceeding defective. We look upon our few and petty acts of charity with a multiplying glass, and see one as it were ten. Who almost are there, that will draw somewhat from their excesses, to turn into this channel? that will abate a lace from their garment, or a dish from their table, to bestow upon the necessities of the poor? In a word, we ought not only to be free from hurting, but be *a tree of life to our neighbour.*

Let us then be convinced of our guiltiness in the breach of this precept. Men think it much if they can forgive, upon the acknowledgment and submission of those who have injured them; but they aspire not to this, cordially to forgive those who still continue to wrong and provoke them, to compassionate them, and pray for them, and repay all their evil with meekness and good-will. We consider not how

sublime the rule of Christianity is, and how low our spirits are, and how far off from it. *Be not overcome of evil*, says the Apostle, *but overcome evil with good*. Rom. xii. 21. It is easy to overcome a man who resists not, but yields; to pardon injury when it ceaseth, and entreats pardon; but when it holds out, and is so stout as still to fight against that goodness and meekness which it meets withal, yet, the Christian ought to persist in these, and overcome it with good. And see our Saviour's rule to them who will be His disciples, against hatred and wrath, Matt. v. 44.—Labour for humble spirits. Pride is the spring of malice and desire of revenge, and of rash anger and contention. This makes men easily swell against any thing that crosses them, because they have laid down this with themselves, that they deserve to be observed and respected, and not crossed at all; and when they find it otherwise, it kindles them to anger. And it is not the degree of provocation, but the different temper of men's spirits, makes them more or less subject to anger. It matters not how great the fire be, but where it falls.

Consider, 1. That these turbulent passions carry their punishment along with them: they rankle and fester the soul, and fill it full of pain and disturbance. Whereas the spirit of meekness makes the soul of a Christian like the highest region of the air, constantly calm and serene. The Apostle speaking of this commandment of love, says, that *the commandments of God are not grievous*. 1 John v. 3. Certainly, there is such a true pleasure in meekness, forgiving of injuries, and loving our very enemies, that did men know it, they would choose it for the very delight and sweetness of it, though there were no command to enforce it.

2. Consider, particularly against rash anger, how weak and foolish a thing it is. *Anger resteth in the bosom of fools*, saith Solomon. Eccl. vii. 9. A fool's breast is the very natural place of anger, where it dwells. But, as he says elsewhere, *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit*. Prov. xvii. 9. The word is, *a cool spirit*. What a senseless mistake is it for men to think it strength and greatness of spirit, to bear nothing, to be sensible of every touch, and to stand upon their punctilios! Is it not evident weakness, to be able to suffer nothing? We see the weakest persons most subject to anger,—women, children, and the sick, and aged persons; old age being both a continued sickness, and a childishness, as they call it, and as the dregs of a man's life turned into vinegar: it is the weakness of all these that makes them fretful*. In a word, it is *the glory of a man to pass by a transgression*. Every one can be angry, and most re they who are weakest; but to be above it, and have it under command, is the advantage of those who are truly wise, and therefore, worthy of our study to attain it.

3. That which should most prevail with Christians to study love and meekness of spirit, and a propension to do good to all, is, the conformity that is in this temper to our Head and Redeemer, Jesus Christ,—to partake of his dove-like Spirit. *Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart. The fruit of the Spirit is love*. Gal.

* *Omne infirmum naturâ querulum.*

v. 22. And this he hath given as the commission and badge of his disciples, that, as he loved them, so they love one another. John xiii. 35.

PRECEPT VII.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

As the perverseness of nature hath found out crooked ways, and sinful abuses of things that we enjoy and use, the holy Law of God aims at the rectifying of these abuses, and the bounding and limiting of our ways by a strait rule.

And this Precept particularly debars us from all sinful uncleanliness, under the name of one kind of it; That, answerably to our condition or estate of it, whatsoever it is, single or married, we ought to endeavour that cleanness and purity of soul and body, that becomes the temples of the Holy Ghost.

I purpose not to reckon up particularly the several sorts and degrees of sin of this kind; for chastity is a delicate, tender grace, and can scarcely endure the much naming of itself, far less of those things that are so contrary to it. Though in the Law of God, given to the people of the Jews, there is express mention of the gross abominations of this kind, because practised by the Gentiles, and to be forbidden them; and though the Apostle writing to the Gentiles newly converted from those abominations, of necessity mentions particulars of them; yet, further than that necessity of reproving them where they are in custom, requires, he hates the very naming of them. Eph. v. 3—12. As the old Roman satirists, while they seem to reprove vice, rather teach it by their impudent descriptions of it; the new Roman casuists, some of them, are as foul that way.

It may suffice to regulate us in this, if we believe this truth, that whatsoever is in this kind, besides the lawful use of marriage, is a breach of this holy law of God, whether it be in action or in words, or so much as in thought. And if this be true,—as it is, if we believe Truth itself, our Saviour's interpretation,—that an unchaste look, or thought, makes a man guilty, then, surely, whatsoever is beyond these is more grossly sinful.

What a shameful thing it is that our holy profession of religion should be so dishonoured by the abounding of uncleanness amongst us! In many, it breaks forth scandalously; and if there be any who live in that way of wickedness undiscovered, and walk secretly in it, yet, the pure Lord who perfectly sees and hates it, will call them to account, and *judge them*, according to the Apostle's word, Heb. xiii. 4. Consider this likewise, any of you who have not lamented your former impure conversation, but being reformed outwardly, by your years or condition of life, yet never have inwardly repented, and been deeply humbled for the sins of your youth. True conversion is not so light a work. David remembers his former sins, and prays earnestly that God would not remember them against him. Psal. xxv. 7. And on the contrary, you who think not on them, may justly fear that God will remember them, because you yourselves have forgot them.

They who give their tongues the liberty of scurrilous jesting and impure speeches, cannot but have filthy hearts: their noisome breath argues rottenness within.

Yea, they who proceed no further in uncleanness, than to entertain and lodge the fancies or thoughts of it, rolling them on their beds, and delighting in them, even such are exceeding guilty and abominable in the sight of God, who doth not only see into the heart, but most of all eyes and regards it. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, says Solomon, *for from thence are the issues of life.* Prov. iv. 23. Certainly, they who can dispense with themselves in these inward heart-uncleannesses and find no remorse, cannot think the Spirit of God dwells within them; for, if He were there, He would be shewing his discontent and anger against that unholiness which is so contrary to Him.

And this, they who have any truth of grace will find, that if they be not either free from the assaults, or at least, if those filthy birds, such impure thoughts, be not perfectly beaten away when they light on the soul, if they stay but any time with them, although they afterwards do chase them out with indignation, yet they do leave such a stain as grieves and saddens the Holy Spirit in them, and for a time they find it not act in prayer, and in spiritual comfort, so cheerfully as before. *Let no corrupt* (or rotten) *communication proceed out of your mouth*, says the Apostle, *and grieve not the Holy Spirit.* Eph. iv. 29. Rotten speech grieves the Holy Spirit, and so do such thoughts too, which are man's speech with himself, and therefore being most familiar and frequent with him, ought to be most regarded and watched over. There is not any thing will more readily dry up the sweetness and spiritual moisture of the soul, and cause the graces in it to wither than the impure fire of lust. Therefore, you, who have any beginnings of grace, and would have it flourish, beware of this, and quench it in its first sparkles; if you do not, it may, in a little time, rise above your power, and still prove very dangerous.

If you would be freed from the danger and importunity of this evil, make use of these usual and very useful rules. [1.] Be sober and temperate in diet; withdraw fuel. [2.] Be modest and circumspect in your carriage. Guard your ears and eyes, and watch over all your deportment. Beware of undue and dangerous familiarities with any, upon what pretence soever. [3.] Be choice in your society, for there is much in that. [4.] In general, flee all occasions and incentives to uncleanness. But truly, the solid care must begin within; otherwise, all these outward remedies will prove but *empiric* medicines, as they call them.

1. First then, lean not upon moral resolves and particular purposes against uncleanness, but seek a total, entire change of the heart, and to find the sanctifying Spirit of grace dwelling within you.

2. Labour to have the heart possessed with a deep apprehension of the holiness and purity of God, and then, of His presence and eye upon all thy actions, yea, thy most secret thoughts. His eye is more piercing than that any wickedness can be hid from Him, and more pure than to behold it without indignation. The darkness is as noon-day to Him. I cannot steal a thought out of His sight, though

it be never so sudden and short. Then think, If I pretend to communion and converse with my God, He is all holiness, therefore uncleanness can never attain that to which I aspire. *What communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?* And shall I lose or hazard the sweetness of His presence for so base a delight? How can I offer that heart to Him in prayer, which hath been wallowing in the mire of unclean practice or imagination? Resolve to drive out the assaults which you are incident to: How shall I do, or think thus? My holy God is looking on me. This was Joseph's preservation, *Shall I do this evil, and sin against God?*

3. Acquaint yourselves with spiritual delights, and this will make a happy diversion from those which are sensual and earthly. Somewhat a man must have to delight in. It is the philosopher's remark, that they who know not the true pleasure of the mind, turn to the base pleasures of the body.

Some moral men, seeking the higher delight of the mind, in their way have persuaded themselves to a generous disdain of their bodies. How much more powerfully may supernatural delights of the soul, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, wean it from these gross, sensual pleasures, which the beasts have in common with us; at least from the immoderate desire and all unlawful pursuit of them! Nothing indignifies the soul more than lust. When David had sinned this way, it had so made havock of grace within him, that he cries not only for cleansing, but for a new creation, as if all were undone; *Create in me a clean heart.* He found it so slavish and ignoble a sin, that he prays to be re-established by God with *a free* (or noble) *spirit.* Psal. li. 10, 12.

4. Increase in the love of Christ. For, as that grows, there is a decrease of the love of sin, yea, of the immoderate love of all inferior things; as the sun-beams eat out the fire, this Divine and heavenly love consumes the other. All our love is too scarce or poor for him, when it is collected and drawn altogether to run only towards him; and therefore, there is none to spare upon the flesh and the lusts of it, nor upon any creature, but as he allows and appoints. The sense of his love takes up the whole soul, and he lodging in it, is that true *Agnus castus* that makes it chaste,—that bundle of myrrh that hath a virtue to preserve the Christian from the corruptions of lust.

That love of Jesus Christ is strong as death, kills all opposite affections; and indeed, it alone is worthy of the soul, the noble, immortal soul. Oh, how is it abased, when it is drawn down to sensuality, and so made a slave to its servant, the flesh! *Major sum, et ad majora genitus,* could a Roman philosopher say, *quàm ut sim mancipium mei corporis: I am greater, and born to greater things, than to be a slave to my body.* How unworthy is it, that being capable of the highest good, the fruition of God, we should forget ourselves so far as to serve vile lust, and forfeit the happiness and pleasures of eternity. Far be it from us. *God hath called us to holiness, and not to uncleanness,* says the Apostle. 1 Thess. iv. 7.

Flee all unlawful and forbidden delights. And those that are lawful, do not engage your hearts to them, love them not immoderately; and they can scarcely be loved without excess, if loved at all. Shall I say

then, If you use them, yet, love them not, reserve that for purer enjoyments? Says not the Apostle this? 1 Cor. vii. 30. *Let them that rejoice, be as if they rejoiced not;* and, particularly, *they that marry, as if they married not.* And his reason is weighty: *For the fashion of this world passeth away.*

Remember to what a pure and excellent condition we are called as Christians, and with what a price we are bought to be holy; and let it be our firm purpose and study, to glorify God in our souls and bodies, for they are His.

PRECEPT VIII.

Thou shalt not steal.

God is the God of order, and not of confusion: it is He that hath authorized and appointed peculiarity of possessions unto men, and withal, that society and commerce amongst them which serves for their mutual good. And property reserved, makes one man, in what he possesses, useful and helpful to another. And He hath given this precept of His Law, to regulate them in these things, to be the rule of that which we call *contentation* or *justice*, equity towards our neighbour, in the matter of his goods or proper possessions.

This, then, being the scope of the Commandment, whatsoever breaks this hedge, is, as comprehended under the name of *theft*, here forbidden:—all manner of injustice and wrong done to our neighbour in his estate, whether by violence or by sleight of hand, by force or fraud, yea, if it be but so much as in affection or desire; for, (as we have often said,) the law is spiritual, and binds not only the hands, but the heart. So then, not only gross robberies and thefts are here forbidden, but all oppression and extortion in superiors, all purloining and unfaithfulness in inferiors; too strict exaction in masters, and slothfulness in servants, or whatsoever else may tend to their master's damage; all bribery and receiving of gifts, to the perverting of justice; all deceit and over-reaching in commerce, or trading, or bargaining; taking advantage in buying or selling, or any contract upon the ignorance or simplicity of those we deal withal; all desire and seeking of our neighbour's loss to our gain; all the degrees of sacrilege and simony; all idleness and neglect in men's particular callings, by which they either impoverish themselves, and are *worse than infidels, not providing for their families*, (1 Tim. v. 8,) or, if they have certain provision by their callings, in neglecting the duties of them, they wrong those from whom, or for whose sakes they are so, provided, as magistrates and ministers, who have, or should have, honourable maintenance for their public service, the one in the Commonwealth, the other in the Church. As it is a great sin to curtail or detain what is due that way, so it is no less wickedness in them, if they be remiss and careless of those duties to which they are obliged for the public good. In a word, whosoever can digest any kind of undue gain to themselves, or do any prejudice to their neighbour in the least, are guilty. Yea, they sin against this Precept, who do not with all their power further the advantage and good of their neighbour in his out-

ward condition; who do not help and relieve those they see in want, so far as their ability reaches.

There is a kind of right that the poor have to supply; it is not merely arbitrary to you. Though they have not such a right as to take it at their own hand, or to seek it at the houses of human justice, yet, they have such a right as that your hand ought not to detain it. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due.* Prov. iii. 27. Which is evidently meant (and interpreters take it so) of all kind of doing good, even that of charity and beneficence to the needy, as appears by the following clause, *When it is in the power of thine hand to do it.* And the Septuagint reads, *ἐυποιεῖν τὸν ἐνδεῆ.* It is due; they have a right to it; though not such as they can implead for before men's courts or judicatures, yet in the court of conscience, and in the sight of God, it is duly theirs. The word is from Him who is Lord of it. *Esurientium panis est qui apud te mucescit, et sitientium potus qui apud te acescit.* [Ambrose.] *It is the bread of the hungry that moulds by thee, and the drink of the thirsty that sours by thee.* Although thou art in possession, hast superfluity by thee, what he wants is his by right; he is lord of it; for the Lord of all hath turned over His right to thy poor brother. The Lord Himself needs it not; thy goodness cannot reach Him. He hath furnished thee with such as need it, and may be His receivers, and have warrant from Him to take it up in His stead. And be sure He will acknowledge the receipt of it: thou hast His own word and writ for it, a bill of exchange under His own hand, that what you give to the poor, be put upon His accounts. *He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay it.* Prov. xix. 17. And again, *In that you did it unto one of these,* says our Saviour, *ye did it unto me.* Matt. xxv. 40. It is the surest and most lasting part of a man's estate, that is put into their hand. *Quas dederis solas semper habebis opes. Thine alms alone, of all thy wealth, thou shalt possess, for ever.* If God be *solvendo*, if He be a sufficient debtor, it is treasure laid up in Heaven.

So then, this Precept requires uprightness and equity in all our dealings; a desire to right and advantage our brethren as ourselves, willing their gain and prosperity as our own; diligence and industry in our callings, and giving to all others their due. Though men are not obliged to a scottish simplicity; but ought to endeavour so to understand their affairs, that they may avoid circumvention by others' craft; yet, a prudent simplicity is the right stamp of a Christian mind, to be single and ingenuous, and rather to suffer loss from others, than cause them any. In a word, the Apostle's rule is express and full. 1 Thes. iv. 6: *That no man over-reach or defraud his brother in any matter;* and he adds a very forcible reason, *Because the Lord is the avenger of all such; as we have also* (says he) *forewarned you and testified.* Men are ready to find out poor shifts to deceive themselves, when they have some way deceived their brother, and to stop the mouth of their own conscience with some quibble and some slight excuse, and force themselves at length to believe they have done no wrong. Therefore, the Apostle, to fright them out of their shifts, sets before them an exacter Judge, who cannot be deceived nor mocked, who shall one day unvail the conscience, and blow away these vain

self-excuses as smoke; and that just Lord will punish all injustice: *He is the avenger of all such.*

At the first view, a man would think the breach of this Commandment concerns but few persons, some thieves and robbers, and some professed deceivers, or if you add some cozening tradesmen and merchants; but the truth is, there is scarcely any one of the Commandments so universally and frequently broken, and whereof the breach is so little observed, and therefore, so seldom repented of by the greatest part. As the Apostle James says, *He is a perfect man who offends not in his words*, truly, he is a rare man who offends not, and that remarkably, (if men would remark themselves,) against this Commandment, *Thou shalt not steal.*

To say nothing of the oppression and hard exactions of such as are superiors of lands, grinding the faces of the poor, and squeezing them till the blood come, and so putting in the same blood of the poor amongst their estates, which many times proves a canker to all the rest; and the thievishness of servants, and of the poorer sort, making no conscience at all of whatsoever they can filch from their masters, or those that are richer than they, counting all they can snatch good booty and lawful prize: to pass by, likewise, the particular deceits which are usual in several callings, and are incorporate with them through long custom, and become a part of the mystery of those callings, and therefore, men dispense with themselves in them as the inseparable sin of their calling, and have no remorse for them: not to insist on these and such like, consider, how frequently this *meum et teum, mine and thine*, proves the apple of strife betwixt the nearest friends, and divides their affections, and begets debates amongst them; parents and children, and brethren, &c. And certainly, there is always some unjust desire on one side in those contentions, and sometimes, on both sides. How few are there who have hearts so weaned from the world, as in all things to prefer the smallest point of equity to the greatest temptation of gain!—who in their affairs and all that concerns them, are universally careful to deal with an even hand and even heart, and to keep close to that golden rule, drawn in nature, but almost lost and smothered in the rubbish and corruption of nature, but drawn anew by our Saviour's hand, not only in his Gospel, but in the hearts of his real followers. *That which thou wouldst have others do to thee, do thou unto them:*—who, when they have any thing to transact, wherein is their brother's interest, as well as their own, do in their thoughts change places with him, set him in their own room, and themselves in his, and deal with them after that manner; who think, What should I be willing to have done to me, were I he? That same will I do to him. Were I in that poor man's condition who begs an alms, would I not rather have some relief, than a churlish, or, at least, an empty answer? Were I he who buys, should I not, and might I not justly and reasonably, will to have it so, that no more be exacted of me than the right and due price? Then, so will I use him. How few are there that walk, I say, by this rule! And yet, all that do not thus, are breakers of this Commandment in the sight of God.

How few, who are inviolable observers of equity, and are truly liberal and bountiful answerably to their power!—who will sometimes

on purpose bate a dish from their table, or a lace from their garment, not to make their stock greater, but to bestow on the poor; who are truly desirous of the good and prosperity of others, and further it all they can!

It is to be like God: this is the particular, Matt. v. 45, wherein likeness to our Heavenly Father is pressed. And this is meant by *Homo homini Deus.* Certainly, were we acquainted with it, it is more true delight, to be, not only just, but liberal, than to possess much. It is not to possess, but to be possessed by it, to have heaps, and no heart nor power to use them. He who is thus, doth not only defraud others, but himself; steals from his own necessities, to sacrifice to his god, his chest or bag. *Quicquid omnibus abstulit, sibi negat.* When a man hath such a sum, and though he hath use for it, dares not break it, what is it better than if it were still under grouud in the mine? It is no more at his service; yea, so much the worse, that he is racked betwixt plenty and want, betwixt having and not having it.

But the covetous and the prodigal sin against this Commandment: the covetous, by unjust ways of gaining, and the unjust keeping of what he hath gained, keeping it up both from others and himself; and the prodigal, by profuseness, making foolish wants to himself, which drive him upon unjust ways of supply, *Turpiter amittens quod turpiùs reparet,* as Seneca speaks. Thus, he who is prodigal must be covetous too, and though men think not so, these two vices which seem so opposite, not only may, but do often dwell together, and covetousness is prodigality's purveyor, being fire for it to feed it; for otherwise it could not subsist, but would starve within awhile. Here then, both avarice and prodigality are condemned: only true equity, and frugal and wise liberality, are obedience to it.

The main causes of all unjust and illiberal dealing, are these two: 1. Diffidence or distrust of the Divine providence and goodness. And 2. That Πλεονεξια, that same *amor sceleratus habendi,* the fond desire of having much.

1. When a man doth not fully trust God with providing for Him, and blessing Him in just and lawful ways, but apprehends want unless he take some more liberty and elbow-room, this makes him step now and then out of the way, to catch at undue gain by fraud and over-reaching, or some such way. But this is a most foolish course. This is to break loose out of God's fatherly hand, and so, to forego all that we can look for from Him, and to take ways of our own; to choose rather to go a shifting for ourselves in the crooked and accursed ways of unrighteousness, than to be at His providing. Labour, therefore, for a fixed belief of His wisdom, and goodness, and all-sufficiency; and then the greatest straits and wants will not drive you to any indirect ways, wherein you run from Him, but will still draw you nearer to Himself, and there you will stay and wait upon His hand till he supply you.

2. Desire of having much, or covetousness, whether it be to hoard up or lavish out. But this is a madness. This desire of having much, is never cured by having much: it is Βουλίμια, *canina fames,*—an insatiable *dog-hunger.*

That known determination of the moralist was most true, That to

be truly rich, is not to have much, but to desire little. Labour, then, not to desire much; or rather, desire much, desire to have the Lord for your portion. *Non est illud desiderium, πλεονεξία, sed πανεξία. That desire is not a grasping at much, but at all.* And if you indeed desire Him, you shall have Him; and if you have Him, you cannot but be satisfied, for He is all. To Him, therefore, be all praise, honour, and glory for ever. Amen.

PRECEPT IX.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The Apostle St. James, in that sharp but most true censure of the tongue, might well call it *an unruly evil.* There are but ten precepts or words of the Law of God, and you see, two of them, so far as concerns the outward organ and vent of the sins there forbidden, are bestowed on it, tending, if not only, yet mainly, to keep it in order; one in the first Table, and this other in the second; as being ready to fly out both against God and man, if not thus bridled.

The end of this Commandment, is, to guard the good name of men from injury, as the former doth his goods; this possession being no less, yea, much more precious than the other: and because the great robber and murderer of a good name, is, the mischievous, detracting tongue, acted by a malignant heart, it requires in the heart a charitable tenderness of the good name of our brethren; and that will certainly prove truth and charitable speech in the tongue.

Though divines here usually speak of lying, in the general notion and extent of it, and not amiss, being most of all exercised in the kind here mentioned; yet, there be such lies as may be more fitly reputed a breach of some other Commandment. And possibly, the sin of lying in general, as it is a lie, a discrepancy of the speech from the mind, and so, a subverting of the Divine ordinance set in nature, making that which He hath made the interpreter of the mind, to be the disguiser of it, and withal, disregarding God as the searcher of the heart, and sovereign witness of truth, and avenger of falsehood; I say, thus, it may possibly be more proper to refer it to another Commandment, particularly, to the Third. But it imports not much to be very punctual in this. It is seldom or never that one Commandment is broken alone. Most sins are complicate disobedience, and in some sins, the breach of many at once is very apparent. As to instance, in perjury, if it be to testify a falsehood against our brethren, both the Third Commandment and this Ninth are violated at once; and if it be in such a thing as toucheth his life, the Sixth likewise suffers with them.

This perjury, or false testimony in a public judiciary way, is, we see, by the express words and letter of the Command, forbidden, as the highest and most heinous wrong of this kind. *Ut testis falsi aut testimonium falsi non dices aut respondebis.* But, under the name of this, (as it is in the other Commandments,) all the other kinds and degrees of offence against our neighbour's good name are comprised.

1. All private ways of calumny and false imputation.

2. All ungrounded and false surmises or suspicions; all uncharitable construction of others' actions and carriage.

3. Strict remarking of the faults of others, without any calling so to do, or honest intention of their good; which appears, if, having observed any thing that of truth is reproveable, we seek not to reclaim them by secret and friendly admonition, but passing by themselves, divulge it abroad to others. Ephes. iv. 15. We must not only *speak the truth*, but, *in love*. For this is a most foolish self-deceit, to think that, because it is not forged, but true, that thou speakest, this keeps thee free of the Commandment: no, thy false intention and malice makes it calumny and falsehood in thee, although, for the matter of it, what thou sayest be most true. All thou gainest by it, is, that thou dost tumble and bemire thyself in the sin of another, and makest it possibly more thine than it is his own who committed it; for he, may be, hath some touch of remorse for it, whereas it is evident thou delightest in it; and though thou preface it with a whining, feigned regret and semblance of pitying him, and add withal some word of commending him in somewhat else, this is but the gilding and sugaring the pill to make men swallow it the more easily, and thy bitter malice pass unperceived. They who by their calling ought to watch over the lives of others, must do it faithfully and diligently, admonishing and rebuking privately; and where that prevails not, they may, yea, they ought to do it more publicly; but all in love, seeking nothing but the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

4. Easy hearing and entertaining of misreports and detractions when others speak them. Exod. xxiii. 1. This is that which maintains and gives subsistence to calumny; otherwise it would starve and die of itself, if nobody took it in and gave it lodging. When malice pours it out, if our ears be shut against it, and there be no vessel to receive it, it would fall like water upon the ground, and could no more be gathered up. But there is that same busy humour that men have,—it is very busy, and yet, the most have of it more or less,—a kind of delight, and contentment to hear evil of others, unless it be of such as they affect, to hear others slighted and disesteemed, that they readily drink in, not without some pleasure, whatsoever is spoken of this kind. *The ear trieth the words*, as Job says, as *the mouth tasteth meats;* but certainly, the most ears are perverse and distempered in their taste, as some kinds of palates are; they can find sweetness in sour calumny. But, because men understand one another's diet in this, that the most are so, this is the very thing that keeps up the trade, makes backbiting and detractions abound so in the world, and verifies that known observation in the most, That *the slanderer wounds three at once*,—himself, him he speaks of, and him that hears. For this third, truly it is in his option to be none of the number: if he will, he may shift his part of the blow, by not believing the slander; yea, may beat it back again with ease upon the slanderer himself by a check or frown, and add that stroke of a repulse to the wound of guiltiness he gives himself.

5. They offend, who seek in any kind at the expense of the good name and esteem of others, to increase their own; *ex alieni nominis jactura gradum sibi faciunt ad gloriam**—, out of others'

* Sallust.

ruins to make up themselves; and who therefore pull down as much as they can, and are glad to have others to help them to detract from the repute of their brethren, particularly, any who are in likelihood to surpass and obscure them; and for this reason incline always rather to hear and speak of the imperfections and dispraise of others, than to their advantage, and would willingly, *Ottoman*-like, kill the good name of their brethren, that theirs may reign alone*. This is a vile disease, and such as cannot be incident to any mind that is truly virtuous and gracious. No, such need not this base, dishonest way to raise themselves, but are glad to see virtue, and whatsoever is praise-worthy, to flourish in whomsoever. These are lovers of God indeed, and of His glory, and not their own; and therefore, as all He bestows on themselves, they render back the honour of it to Him, so, they are glad to see many enriched with His best gifts. For seeing all good that all have, belongs to God, as the sovereign owner and dispenser, this contents and rejoices His children when they see many partake of His bounty, for the more is His glory: and as in love to their brethren, they are always willing to take notice of what is commendable in them, and to commend it, so, they do this the more willingly, because they know that all praise of goodness at last terminates and ends in God. As Solomon says of the rivers, *Unto the place from whence they come, thither they return.*

6. They sin against this Commandment, who, although they no way wrong their neighbour's good name, yet, are not careful to do their utmost to right it when it suffers, to remove aspersions from them, and to clear them all that may be. For this is here required, to desire and delight in, and further the good name of others, even as our own; to look most willingly on the fairest side of their actions, and take them in the best sense, and be as inventive of favourable constructions, (yet, without favouring vice,) as malice is witty to misinterpret to the worst; to observe the commendable virtues of our brethren, and pass by their failings; as many, like scurvy flies skip over what is sound in men, and love to sit upon their sores.

It is lamentable to consider how much this evil of mutual detraction and supplanting the good name one of another, is rooted in man's corrupt nature, and how it spreads and grows in their conversation: as the Apostle St. Paul cites it out of the Psalmist, as the description of our nature, *Their throat is an open sepulchre; they have deceitful tongues, and the poison of asps is under their lips.* Rom. iii. 13. Their throat an open sepulchre, full of the bones, as it were, of others' good names that they have devoured; and, amongst other their endowments, they are *whisperers, backbiters, despiteful,* Rom. i. 30. But it is strange that Christians should retain so much of these evils, who profess themselves renewed, and sanctified, and guided by the Spirit of God. Consider, in your visits and discourses, if something of this kind doth not entertain you often, and lavish away that time you might spend in mutual edification, abusing it to descant upon the

* The Rabbins frequently condemn this. Hammith Cabbed, &c. *Qui honorat se ex ignominia socii sui, non habet partem in seculo venturo.* Beres. Rab. *Item, qui per contemptum aliorum laudem suam quærit, miserrimus est omnium hominum. Quis est honore dignus! Qui honorat alios homines.* Aboth. c. 4.

actions and life of others, in such a way as neither concerns nor profits us; taking an impertinent, foolish delight in inquiring and knowing how this party lives, and the other*. This is a very common disease, as Nazianzen observes†. And thus men are most strangers at home; have not leisure to study, and know, and censure themselves, they are so busied about others. It may be there is not always a height of malice in their discourses, but yet, by much babbling to no purpose, they slide into idle detraction and censure of others, beside their intention; for, *in multitude of words there wants not sin.* Prov. x. 9.

And the greatest part are so accustomed to this way, that, if they be put out of it, they must sit dumb and say nothing. There is, I confess, a prudent observation of the actions of others, a reading of men, as they call it, and it may be, by a Christian, done with Christian prudence and benefit; and there may be too, a useful way of men's imparting their observation of this kind, one to another, concerning the good and evil, the abilities more or less, that they remark in the world; but truly, it is hard to find such as can do this aright, and know they agree in their purpose with honest, harmless minds, intending evil to none, but good to themselves, and admitting of nothing but what suits with this. Amongst a throng of acquaintance, a man shall, it may be, find very few by whose conversation he may be really bettered, and who return him some benefit for the expense of his time in their society. Howsoever, beware of such as delight in vanity and lying and defaming of others, and withdraw yourselves from them, and set a watch before your own lips. Learn to know the fit season of silence and speech; for that is a very great point of wisdom, and will help very much to the observing of this precept, to give your tongue to be governed by wisdom and piety. Let it not be as a thorny bush, pricking and hurting those who are about you, nor altogether a barren tree, yielding nothing, but a fruitful tree, a *tree of life to your neighbour*, as Solomon calls the tongue of the righteous. Prov. xv. 4.

And let your hearts be possessed of those two excellent graces, Humility and Charity. Then will your tongue not be in danger of hurting your neighbour; for it is pride and self-love, makes men delight in that. Those are the idols to which men make sacrifice of the good name and reputation of others. The humble man delights in self-disesteem, and is glad to see his brethren's name flourish; it is pleasing music to him to hear the virtues of others acknowledged and commended, and a harsh discord to his lowly thoughts, to hear any thing of his own. And the other, Charity, *thinks no evil*, is so far from casting false aspersions on any, that it rather casts a veil upon true failings and blemishes: *Love covers a multitude of sins.* It is like God's love that begets it, which covers all the sins of his own children.

* *Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam.* AUGUSTINE. Conf. l. 10. cap. 3.

† Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἡδὺ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὡς τὸ λαλεῖν τὰ ἀλλότρια, NAZIANZEN. ORAT. 1.

PRECEPT X.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

It is a known truth, that there is no sound cure of diseases without a removal of their inward cause. Therefore, this second Table of the Law, containing the rule of equity for the redress of unrighteousness in men's dealing one with another, doth, in this last precept of it, strike at the very root of that unrighteousness, the corrupt desires and evil concupiscence of the heart; *Thou shalt not covet.*

The Romish division of this into two, is so grossly absurd, and so contrary both to the voice of antiquity and reason, that it needs not stay us much to shew it such. The thing forbidden is one, *Thou shalt not covet;* and if the several things not to be coveted, divide it, it will be five or six as well as two. Though it be Peter's pretended sword makes the division, yet, certainly, it is not Paul's ὀρθοτομεῖν, not a dividing of the word aright, but a cutting it, as it were, beside the joint. The truth is, they would never have mistook so far as to have offered at this division, were they not driven upon it by an evil necessity of their own making; because they have quite cut out the Second, they are forced, for making up the number, to cut this in two. This is but to salve a first wrong with a second; it is *vitium primæ concoctionis quod non corrigitur in secunda*, as they speak: having smothered one Commandment, they would have this divided, as the harlot the living child.

The subject of this Commandment, that which it forbids, is not, I confess, original sin in its nature and whole latitude; no, nor all kinds of sinful motions immediately arising from it; but such as concern human things, belonging to this second Table as their rule: as is clear in all the particulars named in the Commandment, and the general word which closes it, including the rest and all other things of that kind. *Nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.* Nor is it needful (with others) for the distinguishing of this precept from the rest, to call this concupiscence here forbidden, only the first risings of it in the heart without consent, whereas the other Commandments forbid the consent of the will. I conceive there is no danger to say, that both are forbidden, both in this and in the rest, but in this more expressly.

For what great necessity is there of such subtile distinguishing? May not this be sufficient, That what is included in the other Commandments duly understood, it pleased the Divine Wisdom to deliver in this last more expressly, that none might pretend ignorance; and so to provide for the more exact observance of justice and equity amongst men in their actions, by a particular law given to the heart, the fountain of them, regulating it in its dispositions and motions, even the very first stirrings of it, which do most discover its disposition?

And that this is no tautology, nor a superfluous labour, unsuiting the exquisite brevity of this Law, we shall easily confess, if we consider that natural hypocrisy and self-indulgence that is in men, which makes them still less regard the temper and actings of their hearts, than their

outward carriage, notwithstanding this express Commandment concerning it. How much more would they have thought their thoughts, at least such as proceed not to full consent, exempted from the Law, if there had been nothing spoken of them, but they only included in the other precepts! We know how the Doctors of Rome extenuate the matter, and how favourable their opinion is in this point, notwithstanding this clear voice of the Law of God condemning all concupiscence. The Apostle St. Paul confesses ingenuously his own short-sightedness, though a Pharisee instructed in the Law, that unless the Law had said, *Thou shalt not lust*, he had not found it out in the other Commandments, nor known the sinfulness of it. Rom. vii. 7.

This all-wise Lawgiver knew both the blindness of man's mind, and the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of his heart, and therefore, takes away all pretext, and turns him out of all excuse, giving this last commandment expressly concerning the heart, and so teaching him the exact and spiritual nature of all the rest.

This Commandment pursues the iniquity of man into its beginning and source. Our Saviour calls the evil heart, *an evil treasure;* it is an inexhaustible treasure of evil, yea, it diminisheth not at all, but increaseth rather by spending; the acting of sin confirming and augmenting the corrupt habit of it in the heart. Out of this *evil treasure* issue forth those pollutions that *defile the whole man,—evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,* &c. Matt. xv. 19.

It is not proper here to speak at large of the first motions of sin in general, and of the way to distinguish (if any such can be given as certain) the injections of Satan, evil thoughts darted in by him, and such as spring immediately from that corruption which lodgeth within our own breasts; and other things that concern the subject: only, this we ought to observe as pertinent and useful, that if we did consider the purity of the Law of God and the impurity of our own hearts, the continual risings of sinful concupiscences within us, that stain us and all our actions, this would lay us a great deal lower in our own opinion than usually we are. *The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,* says the Apostle. Rom. vii. 14.

Men think it is well with them, and they please themselves to think so, and glory in it, that their whole life hath been outwardly unblameable, and, possibly, free from the secret commission of gross sins. But would they, who are thus most spotless, look a little deeper inward upon the incessant workings of vain, sinful thoughts, which at least touch upon the affection, and stir it somewhat; and consider their hearts, naturally like boiling pots, still sending up of this scum of evil concupiscence, and, as a fountain casteth forth her water, as Jeremiah speaks, this bitter poison-spring still streaming forth, and even in the best, not fully dried up*: certainly, the due sight of these would abate much of those gay thoughts which any can have of themselves, and, from the best and most sensible, would draw out the Apostle's word,

* *Tres sunt transgressiones, à quibus homo nullo die, inquiunt Talmudici, nunquam in hac vita liberabitur cogitationes peccati; attentio orationis;* (i. e. *quod nunquam satis attentè per omnem attentionem orare possit;*) *et lingua mala.* [Bava. Bosca. f. 1342.] There are three transgressions, say the Talmudists, from which a man can no day ever in this life be free; the thoughts of sin, wanderings in prayer, and an evil tongue.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? There is nothing that doth more certainly both humble and grieve the godly man, than the sense of this; and because till then, it will not cease to vex him, nothing makes him more long for the day of his full deliverance, and makes him cry, *Usquequo, Domine, usquequo? O, how long, O Lord, how long?*

We are taught by this Commandment, that great point of spiritual prudence, to observe the beginnings and conception of sin within us, and to crush it then when it is weakest, before it pass on in its usual gradation, as the Apostle St. James makes it, James i. 14, 15. If it *draw us away* but to hear it, it will *entice* us, take us with delight; and then it will, by that, work us to consent, and *having so conceived*, it will *bring forth sin*, and *sin finished* will *bring forth death*.

Again, because, as we see, the very concupiscence itself, though it proceed no further, pollutes and leaves a stain behind it; this calls for our diligence, to seek that renovation and habitual purity of heart infused from above, and the daily increase of it, being begun, that may free us more and more from that depraved concupiscence and the defilements of it. Think it not enough to cleanse the tongue and the hands, but above all, endeavour for cleanness of heart, and that will keep all the rest clean. See Jam. iv. 8. Jer. iv. 14.

The concupiscence particularly here forbidden, we see, is an inordinate desire, or the least beginning of such a desire, of those outward things which belong not to us, *Thy neighbour's house*, &c. For all breach of the other Commandments of this second Table, have their rise and beginning from such a desire; therefore, this is set last, as the hedge to guard all the rest from violation. For certainly, he that flees the least motion of a wrongful thought, will never proceed to any injurious word or action. So then, this Commandment is broken by the least envious look upon any good of others, or the least bendings of mind after it for ourselves; and by that common mischief of self-love, as the very thing which gives life to all such undue desires; and by that common folly of discontent at our own estate, which begets a wishing for that of others; and this, though it be not joined with an express desire of their loss or hurt, yet, because it is the seed and principle of injustice, therefore it is sinful, and here forbidden.

And, on the contrary, much of the observance of this Precept lies in that *αὐτάρκεια*, that contentedness and satisfaction of mind with our own estate, which will surely keep us free from this disordered coveting. Therefore, chiefly labour to have that wise and sweet contentation dwelling within you, and banish all contrary thoughts, by these and other such like considerations:—

1. If you do indeed believe that it is the sovereign Hand of God that *divides to the nations their inheritance*, as Moses speaks, Deut. xxxii. 8, and so, likewise, to particular men, that He carves to every one their condition and place in the world, you cannot but think He hath done it more wisely than men could do for themselves. They could never agree upon it: every man would think it best for himself to be in the best and highest condition; and that is not possible. But it is best for the making up of the universe, that there be those differences God hath made, and, from the highest to the lowest, He hath

set each one in that station He thought good. There is not a common soldier in an army, but would wish to be a commander, and so, if each might have his will, all would command, and none obey: The like holds in masters and servants, and in all such other differences. So then, seeing those differences are in the world and seeing it wholly belongs to Him who rules the world to dispose of them, our part is no other than contentedly to accept of His disposal, and to serve Him in the station where He hath set us.

2. If you be such as have evidence you are the children of God, then you know, He doth not only allot your condition wisely, but withal, in peculiar love and favour. He perfectly knows what outward estate is particularly fittest for you, and will conduce most to your highest good, and will not miss to give you that, and no other. And certainly it is true in matter of estate, as of our garments, not that which is largest, but that which fits us best, is best for us.

3. Consider, that no outward condition hath contentment in it of itself: this must arise from somewhat within. Men see the great attendance and train of servants that wait upon princes and other great persons, but they see not the train of cares and perplexing thoughts that many times go along too, and are more inseparable attendants than any of the rest: they see their fine clothes and stately buildings, but they see not the secret malcontents and vexations that dwell with them, and are the very linings of the rich apparel. Light things often discontent them. Look at their very pastimes and recreations; they are sometimes as much troubled with disappointment in those, as the poor man is wearied with his labour. It was not a much greater cross that vexed Haman: all his advancement availed not without Mordecai's courtesy. A strange disease, that he felt more the pain of another man's stiff knee, than the contentment of all his honours! But whoso knew their deeper vexations, would admire them less, when crossed in their ambition or friends, or the husband and wife not finding that harmony of dispositions and affections. Few, or none, but have something that a man would willingly leave out, if he were for his wish to be in their condition. The shorter and surer way, then, to contentment, is to be contentedly what he his.

4. Consider those who are below you, and in a far meaner condition, and by that argue yourself, not only to contentment, but to thankfulness. We pervert all: when we look below us, it raises our pride; and when above us, it casts us into discontent. Might we not as well, contrariwise, draw humility out of the one, and contentment out of the other?

5. Seek to be assured that God is yours. Then, whatsoever others possess, you will be sure not to covet it, nor envy them. Those who have most, you will pity, if they want Him; and those who have Him, you will have no envy at them for sharing with you, but love them the more. For that Infinite Good is enough for all that choose Him: and none do so, but those whom He hath first chosen in eternal love.

A SHORT CATECHISM.

Question. WHAT is naturally every man's chief desire?

Answer. To be happy.

Q. Which is the way to true happiness?

A. True religion.

Q. What is true religion?

A. The true and lively knowledge of the Only True God, and of him whom He hath sent, Jesus Christ.

Q. Whence is this knowledge to be learned?

A. All the works of God declare His being, and His glory; but the clearer knowledge of Himself, and His Son Jesus Christ, is to be learned from His own word, contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Q. What do those Scriptures teach us concerning God?

A. That He is one infinite, eternal Spirit, most wise, and holy, and just, and merciful, and the all-powerful Maker and Ruler of the world.

Q. What do they further teach us concerning Him?

A. That He is Three in One, and One in Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. What will that lively knowledge of God effectually work in us?

A. It will cause us to believe in Him, and to love Him above all things, even above ourselves, to adore and worship Him, to pray to Him, and to praise Him, and exalt Him with all our might, and to yield up ourselves to the obedience of all His commandments, as having both made us, and made Himself known to us for that very end.

Rehearse, then, the articles of our belief.

I believe in God the Father, &c.

Rehearse the Ten Commandments of the Law, which are the rules of our obedience, and so, the trial of our love.

A. God spake these words, I am the Lord thy God, &c.

Q. What is the summary our Saviour hath given us of this Law?

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. What is the effectual means of obtaining increase of faith and power to obey, and generally, all graces and blessings at the hand of God?

A. Prayer.

Rehearse that most excellent and perfect prayer that our Saviour hath taught us.

A. Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

Q. In what estate was man created?

A. After the image of God in holiness and righteousness.

Q. Did he continue in that estate?

A. No. But by breaking the commandment which his Maker gave him, eating of the fruit of that tree which was forbidden him, he made himself and his whole posterity subject to sin and death.

Q. Hath God left man in this misery, without all means and hopes of recovery?

A. No. For He so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Q. What is then the great doctrine of the Gospel?

A. That same coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and giving himself to the death of the cross, to take away the sin of the world, and his rising again from the dead, and ascending into glory.

Q. What doth that Gospel mainly teach and really persuade all the followers of it to do?

A. It teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.

Q. How hath our Lord Jesus himself expressed the great and necessary duty of all his disciples?

A. That they deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow him.

Rehearse then some of the chief points wherein we are to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. 1. To surrender ourselves wholly to our Heavenly Father, and his good pleasure in all things, even in the sharpest afflictions and sufferings: and not at all to do our own will, or design our own praise or advantage, but in all things to do His will and intend his glory.

2. To be spotless and chaste, and holy, in our whole conversation.

Add a third.

3. To be meek and lowly, not to slander or reproach, to mock or despise any; and if any do so to us, to bear it patiently, yea, to rejoice in it.

A fourth.

4. Unfeignedly to love our Christian brethren, and to be charitably and kindly affected towards all men, even to our enemies, forgiving them, yea, and praying for them, and returning them good for evil; to comfort the afflicted, and relieve the poor, and to do good for all, as we are able.

Q. Is it necessary that all Christians live according to these rules?

A. So absolutely necessary, that they who do not so in some good measure, whatsoever they profess, do not really believe in Jesus Christ, nor have any portion in him.

Q. What visible seals hath our Saviour annexed to that Gospel, to confirm our faith, and to convey the grace of it to us?

A. The two Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What doth Baptism signify and seal?

A. Our washing from sin, and our new birth in Jesus Christ.

Q. What doth the Lord's Supper signify and seal?

A. Our spiritual nourishment and growth in him, and transforming us more and more into his likeness, by commemorating his death, and feeding on his body and blood, under the figures of bread and wine.

Q. What is required to make fit and worthy communicants of the Lord's Supper?

A. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance towards God, and charity towards all men.

Q. What is faith in our Lord Jesus?

A. It is the grace by which we both believe his whole doctrine, and trust in him as the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, and entirely deliver up ourselves to him, to be taught and saved and ruled by him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Q. What is repentance?

A. It is a godly sorrow for sin, and a hearty and real turning from all sin unto God.

Q. What is the final portion of unbelieving and unrepentant sinners?

A. The everlasting torments of devils.

A. What is the final portion of them who truly repent and believe, and obey the Gospel?

A. The blessed life of angels, in the vision of God for ever.

A Question for young Persons before their first Admission to the Lord's Supper.

Q. Whereas you were, in your infancy, baptised into the name of Jesus Christ, do you now, upon distinct knowledge, and with a firm belief and pious affection, own that Christian faith of which you have given an account, and withal, your baptismal vow of renouncing the service of Satan, and the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and of devoting yourself to God in all holiness of life?

A. I do sincerely and heartily declare my belief of that faith, and own my engagement to that holy vow, and resolve, by the assistance of God's grace, to continue in the careful observance of it all my days.

THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.

PREFACE

BY

THE PUBLISHER OF THE LATIN EDITION.

To the Reader,

"What is grand and substantial," says Quinctilian, "pleases long; while that which is only neat and handsome, charms for a while, but soon cloys *." Now, what can be imagined more grand and substantial, than to contemplate the great Creator of the universe, in his visible works; to view, in this vast volume, which lies always open, his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, and admire the instances thereof, that appear always new and astonishing? Again, what can be more agreeable and sublime, than, turning our eyes to the great mysteries of revealed religion, to read with wonder and delight what is contained in the sacred scriptures, concerning the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race from the dreadful gulf of death and misery into which they had fallen; to review with attention what is therein discovered, with regard to our highest happiness, the rewards of virtue, and the punishment of an impious life; and to have these important matters deeply impressed upon the heart? These truths, however great and interesting, are laid before thee, pious and Christian Reader, in these Theological Dissertations; where thou wilt find them deduced with great learning, explained with clearness and accuracy, and confirmed by powerful arguments. For our Author, now in heaven †, who, while he lived, was equally remarkable for learning and piety, never used to stray beyond the verge of this divine system.

That these remains of his were the sacred lectures he read in the Public Hall of the University of Edinburgh, while he was principal of that university, will admit of no manner of doubt: there are a great many still alive, who can attest this truth; as they were themselves present at these lectures, to their great satisfaction and improvement. They all heard them, some took notes of them; and it is to be

* Quæ solida et ampla sunt diu placent; quæ autem lepida et concinna, paululum quidem mulcent, sed cito satiant. *Fab. Quint.*

† Ὁμακαριτης.

hoped, some had the substance of them powerfully impressed upon their hearts. To these I appeal, and to them, I doubt not, this work will be very acceptable; since those instructions which gave so much pleasure when heard but once, and that in a cursory manner, they may now have recourse to as often as they please; they may read them at their leisure, and draw from them matter of most delightful meditation. And, to be sure, those who have the least divine disposition of mind, will make it the principal business of their life, and their highest pleasure to stray through those delightful gardens, abounding with such sweet and fragrant flowers, and refresh their hearts with the celestial honey that may be drawn from them: nor is there any ground to fear that such supplies will fail; for how often soever you have recourse to them, you will always find them blooming, full of juice, and swelled with the dew of heaven: nay, when by deep and continued meditation, you imagine you have pulled the finest flower, it buds forth again, and what Virgil writes concerning his fabulous golden bough is, in strictest truth, applicable in this case:

——— *Uno avulso, non deficit alter,*
Aureus.

The Lectures I now present thee with, I caused to be copied out fair from a manuscript in the Author's own hand-writing; which was a work that required great care and attention, on account of the blots and interlineations of that original manuscript; for the author had written them in haste, and without the least thought of ever publishing them. This done, at the desire of a great many, I got them printed, and now lay them before the public, in the same order in which they were read, as far as can be recollected from circumstances.

You must not expect to find in these truly sacred lectures, the method commonly used in theological systems; for while our reverend Author clearly explains the doctrines of religion, he intermixes to excellent purpose the principles of piety, and while he enlightens the understanding, he at the same time warms the heart.

Being to treat of religion, he uses a practical method, which is most suitable to his subject, and begins with *happiness*, that being the scope and design of religion, as well as the ultimate end of human life. He begins with an explanation of happiness in general, on which he treats at some length; then proceeds to consider the happiness of man, which may be called perfect and truly divine, as it has for its object the infinitely blessed and perfect Being who created him, and formally consists in the beatific vision and fruition of Him, which is reserved in heaven for those who by faith are travelling through this earth, towards that blessed country. He adds, with great propriety, that happiness, so far as it is compatible with this wretched life of sorrows, consists in true religion, and in religion alone; not only as it is the way which leads directly to that perfect happiness reserved in heaven; but because it is itself of Divine original, and, in reality, the beginning of that very happiness which is to be perfected in the life to come.

He observes, that the doctrine of religion is most justly called Theology, as it has the most high God for its author, object, and end. He suggests many excellent thoughts concerning the Divine existence, and

reasons from the common consent of nations, from the creatures we see about us, and from what we feel and experience within ourselves, as all these so loudly proclaim the being of God: but the argument taken from the harmony and beautiful order of the universe, he prosecutes at great length; and from this consideration, which is attended with greater evidence than all the demonstrations of the sciences, he clearly proves the existence of an eternal, independent Being.

With regard to the nature of God, he advances but little, and with great caution; for concerning the Supreme Being he thought it dangerous even to speak truth; but is very earnest and diffuse in his exhortations to make the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, that shine forth with great lustre in all His works, the subject of our constant and most serious meditation. As to the unfathomable depth of His eternal decrees, he was greatly pleased with that expression of St. Augustine, "Let others dispute, I will admire *."

Amongst His works, the first is that vast and stupendous one, the primitive creation of all things, which, besides the infallible testimony of the inspired oracles, our Author, by a concise, but clear dissertation on the subject, proves quite consonant and agreeable to reason. He then treats of man, of his original integrity, and the most unhappy fall that soon followed. But to this most lamentable story he subjoins another as happy and encouraging as the other is moving, I mean, the admirable scheme of Divine love for the salvation of sinners. A glorious and blessed method, that to the account of the most shocking misery subjoins the doctrine of incomparable mercy! Man, forsaking God, falls into the miserable condition of devils; God, from whom he revolted, determines to extricate him, by His powerful hand, out of this misery; and that this might be the more wonderfully effected, God himself becomes man. "This is the glory of man, by such means raised from his woful state! this the wonder of angels, and this the sum and substance of all miracles united in one †!" The Word was made flesh! He who died as man, as God rose again, and having been seen on earth, returns to heaven, from whence he came. On each of these he advances a few thoughts that are weighty and serious, but, at the same time, pleasing and agreeable.

To these lectures, I have added some exhortations by our Author, to the candidates for the degree of master of arts, delivered at the annual solemnity held in the university for that purpose; together with his meditations on some Psalms, *viz.*, the 4th, 32d, and 130th ‡; because I was unwilling that any of the works of so great a man should continue in obscurity, to be devoured by moths and bookworms, especially one calculated for forming the morals of mankind, and for the direction of life. For in these meditations, he exhorts and excites the youth under his care, not by laboured oratory and pompous expressions, but by powerful eloquence, earnest entreaties, and solid arguments, to the love of Christ, purity of life, and contempt of the world.

* Alii disputent, ego mirabor.

† Hic hominis ex tanto dedecore resurgentis honos, hic angelorum stupor, hoc miraculorum omnium compendium!

‡ These were likewise written in Latin, and have been already translated and published [See Vol. I. of the present edition of the work.]

But what will all this signify to thee, Reader, if thy mind is carried away with childish folly, or the wild rage of passions, or even if thou art still labouring under a stupid negligence of the means of grace, and unconcerned about eternal happiness and thy immortal soul? I doubt not, however, but these truly divine essays will fall into the hands of some, who are endued with a better disposition of mind; nor are we to despair of the rest, "for the Father of spirits liveth still, and He hath His seat in heaven, who instructs the hearts of men on this earth *." May, therefore, the Greatest and Best of Beings grant, that these academical exercises may have happy effects! And that our heavenly Father would second these means with His all-powerful grace, shall be, while he lives, the humble and ardent prayer of him,

Who earnestly desires thy salvation,

JA. FALL.

* Vivit enim spirituum pater, et cathedram habet in cœlo, qui corda docet in terris.

LECTURE I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

With little strength I undertake a great work, or rather, with the least abilities I venture upon a task which is of all others the greatest and most important. Among the various undertakings of men, can an instance be given of one more sublime than an intention to form the human mind anew, after the Divine image? Yet it will, I doubt not, be universally acknowledged, that this is the true end and design, not only of ministers in their several congregations, but also of professors of divinity in schools. And though, in most respects, the ministerial office is evidently superior to that of professors of theology in colleges, in one respect the other seems to have the preference, as it is, at least for the most part, the business of the former to instruct the common sort of men, the ignorant and illiterate; while it is the work of the latter to season with heavenly doctrine the minds of select societies of youth, who have had a learned education, and are devoted to a studious life; many of whom, it is to be hoped, will, by the Divine blessing, become preachers of the same salutary doctrine themselves. And surely this ought to be a powerful motive with all those who, by the Divine dispensation, are employed in such a work, to exert themselves with the greater life and spirit in the discharge of their duty; especially when they consider that those Christian instructions and seeds of true piety, which they instil into the tender minds of their pupils, will by them be spread far and wide, and in due time, conveyed, as it were, by so many canals and aqueducts, to many parts of the Lord's vineyard. Plutarch employs an argument of this kind, to prevail with the philosophers to exert themselves in the instruction of princes and great men, rather than with a haughty sullenness to avoid their company; "For thus, (says he,) you will find a short way to be useful to many." And to be sure, he that conveys the principles of virtue and wisdom into the minds of the lower classes of men, or the illiterate, whatever progress his disciples may mke, employs his time and talents only for the advantage of his pupils; but he that forms the minds of magistrates and great men, or such as are intended for high and exalted stations, by improving one single person, becomes a benefactor to large and numerous societies. Every physician of generous principles, as Plutarch expresses it, [Φιλοκαλος,] would have an uncommon ambition to cure an eye intended to watch over many persons, and convey the sense of seeing to numbers; and a musical instrument-maker would, with uncommon pleasure exert his skill in perfecting a harp, if he knew that it was to be employed by the hands of Amphion, and by the force of its music, to draw stones together for building the walls of Thebes. A learned and ingenious author, alluding to this fable, and applying it to our present purpose, calls professors of theology in schools, makers of harps for building the walls of a far more famed and beautiful city, meaning the Heavenly Jerusalem, in such manner, that the stones of this building being

truly, and without a fable, living, and charmed by the pleasant harmony of the Gospel, come of their own accord to take their places in the wall.

I am not so little acquainted with myself, as to entertain the least hope of success in so great a work by my own strength and abilities; but, while I humbly depend upon the Divine goodness and favour, I have no reason to despair; for in the hand of Omnipotence, all instruments are alike. Nor can it be questioned that He, who made all things out of nothing, can produce any change He pleases in His creatures that are already made; He who gives *Ζωην, και πνοην, και παντα, life and breath, and all things*, can easily strengthen the weak, and give riches in abundance to the poor and needy. Our emptiness only serves to lay us open to, and attract the fulness of Him "who fills all things, and is over all; who gives wisdom to the mind, and prevents its irregular sallies."

Under His auspices, therefore, young gentlemen, we are to aspire to true and saving wisdom, and to try to raise ourselves above this sublunary world. For it is not my intention to perplex you with curious questions, and lead you through the thorny paths of disputation; but, if I had any share of that excellent art, it would be my delight to direct your way, through the easy and pleasant paths of righteousness, to a life of endless felicity, and be myself your companion in that blessed pursuit. I would take pleasure to kindle in your souls the most ardent desires, and fervent love of heavenly things; and to use the expression of a great divine, add "wings to your souls, to snatch them away from this world, and restore them to God." For, if I may be allowed to speak with freedom, most part of the notions that are treated of in theological schools, that are taught with great pomp and ostentation, and disputed with vast bustle and noise, may possibly have the sharpness of thorns; but they have also their barrenness: they may prick and tear, but they can afford no solid nourishment to the minds of men. *No man ever gathered grapes off thorns, nor figs off thistles.* "To what purpose," saith A Kempis, "dost thou reason profoundly concerning the Trinity, if thou art without humility, and thereby displeasest that Trinity*?" And St. Augustine, upon the words of Isaiah, *I am the Lord that teacheth thee to profit*, observes with great propriety, that the Prophet here mentions utility in opposition to subtilty†. Such are the principles I would wish to communicate to you; and it is my earnest desire and fervent prayer, that while I, according to my measure of strength, propose them to your understanding, He who sits in Heaven, yet condescends to instruct the hearts of men on this earth, may effectually impress them upon your minds.

But that you may be capable of this supernatural light and heavenly instruction, it is, first of all, absolutely necessary, that your minds be called off from foreign objects; and turned in upon themselves; for, as long as your thoughts are dispersed and scattered in pursuit of vanity and insignificant trifles, he that would lay before them the

* Quorsum alta de Trinitate disputare, si careas humilitate, et sic Trinitate displiceas?

† Utilia non subtilia.

principles and precepts of this spiritual wisdom, would commit them, like the sibyl's prophecies, that were written on loose leaves of trees, to the mercy of the inconstant winds, and thereby render them entirely useless. It is certainly a matter of great difficulty, and requires uncommon art, to fix the thoughts of men, especially young men and boys, and turn them in upon themselves. We read in the parable of the Gospel concerning the prodigal son, that, first of all, *he came to himself*, and then returned to his father. It is certainly a very considerable step towards conversion to God, to have the mind fixed upon itself, and disposed to think seriously of its own immediate concerns; which the pious St. Bernard excellently expresses in this prayer: "May I," says he, "return from external objects to my own inward concerns, and from inferior objects rise to those of a superior nature*." I should look upon it as no small happiness, if, out of this whole society, I could but gain one, but wish earnestly I could prevail with many, and still more ardently that I could send you all away, fully determined to entertain more serious and secret thoughts than ever you had before, with regard to your immortal state and eternal concerns. But how vain are the thoughts of men! What a darkness overclouds their minds†! It is the great complaint of God concerning His people, that *they have not a heart to understand*. It is at once the great disgrace and misery of mankind, that they live without forethought. That brutish thoughtlessness, pardon the expression, or, to speak more intelligibly, want of consideration, is the death and ruin of souls. And the ancients observe, with great truth and justice, "that a thoughtful mind is the spring and source of every good thing‡."

It is the advice of the Psalmist, that we should *converse much with ourselves:* an advice, indeed, which is regarded by few; for the greatest part of mankind are no where greater strangers than at home. But it is my earnest request to you, that you would be intimately acquainted with yourselves, and as becomes persons devoted to a studious life, be much at home, much in your own company, and very often engaged in serious conversation with yourselves. Think gravely, To what purpose do I live? Whither am I going? Ask thyself, hast thou any fixed and determined purpose, any end that thou pursuest with steadfastness§? The principles I have embraced under the name of the Christian Religion, the things I have so often heard about a future state and life, and death eternal, are they true or false? If they are true, as we all absolutely profess to believe they are, then, to be sure, the greatest and most important matters of this world are vain and even less than vanity itself: all our knowledge is but ignorance, our riches poverty, our pleasure bitterness, and our honours vile and dishonourable. How little do those men know, who are ambitious of glory, what it really is, and how to be attained! Nay, they eagerly catch at the empty shadow of it, while they avoid and turn their backs upon that glory which is real, substantial, and ever-

* Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, et ab inferioribus ad superiora ascendam.
† O vanas hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!
‡ Intellectus cogitabundus principium omnis boni.
§ Est aliquid quo tendis, et in quid dirigis arcum?

lasting. The happiness of good men in the life to come, is not only infinitely above all our expressions, but even beyond our most enlarged thoughts. By comparing, however, great things with small, we attain some faint notion of these exalted and invisible blessings, from the earthly and visible enjoyments of this world. In this respect, even the Holy Scriptures descend to the weakness of our capacities, and as the Hebrews express it, "The law of God speaks the language of the children of men*." They speak of this celestial life, under the representations of an heritage, of riches, of a kingdom, and a crown, but with uncommon epithets, and such as are by no means applicable to any earthly glory or opulence, however great. It is *an inheritance*, but one that is *uncorrupted, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;* a *kingdom*, but *one that can never be shaken*, much less ruined; which can never be said of the thrones of this sublunary world, as evidently appears from the histories of all nations, and our own recent experience. Here, ye sons of Adam, a covetous and ambitious race, here is room for a laudable avarice; here are motives to excite your ambition, and, at the same time, the means of satisfying it to the full. But it must be acknowledged, that the belief of these things is far from being common. What a rare attainment is faith, seeing that among the prodigious crowds of those who profess to believe in this world, one might justly cry out, Where is a true believer to be found? That man shall never persuade me, that he believes the truth and certainty of heavenly enjoyments, who cleaves to this earth, nay, who does not scorn and despise it, with all its baits and allurements, and employ all his powers, as well as his utmost industry, to obtain these immense and eternal blessings.

Nor is there any thing in the way to these enjoyments that can deter you from it, unless holiness in heart and life appear to be a heavy and troublesome task to you: whereas, on the contrary, nothing surely can be named, that is either more suited to the dignity of human nature, more beautiful and becoming, or attended with greater pleasure. I therefore beseech and entreat you, by the bowels of Divine mercy, and by your own most precious souls, that you would seriously consider these things, and make them your principal study. Try an experiment, attended with no danger or expense; make a trial of the ways of this wisdom, and I doubt not but you will be so charmed with the pleasantness thereof, that you will never thenceforward depart from them. For this purpose, I earnestly recommend to you, to be constant and assiduous in prayer. Nay, it is St. Paul's exhortation, that you *pray without ceasing*. 1 Thes. v. 17. So that prayer may be, not only, according to the old saying, *Clavis diei, et sera noctis*, The key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts up the night; but also, so to speak, a staff for support in the day-time, and a bed for rest and comfort in the night; two conveniences which are commonly expressed by one single Hebrew word. And be assured, that the more frequently you pray, with so much the greater ease and pleasure will your prayers be attended, not only from the common and necessary connexion between acts and habits, but also from the nature of this duty. For prayer, being a kind of conversation with God, gradually

* Lex Dei loquitur linguam filiorum hominum.

purifies the soul, and makes it continually more and more like unto Him. Our love to God is also very much improved by this frequent intercourse with Him; and by His love, on the other hand, the soul is effectually disposed to fervency, as well as frequently in prayer, and can, by no means, subsist without it.

LECTURE II.

Of HAPPINESS, *its Name and Nature, and the Desire of it implanted in the Human Heart.*

How deep and dark is that abyss of misery, into which man is precipitated by his deplorable fall; since he has thereby lost, not only the possession, but also the knowledge of his chief or principal good! He has no distinct notion of what it is, of the means of recovering it, or the way he has to take in pursuit of it. Yet the human mind, however stunned and weakened by so dreadful a fall, still retains some faint idea, some confused and obscure notions of the good it has lost, and some remaining seeds of its heavenly original*. It has also still remaining, a kind of languid sense of its misery and indigence, with affections suitable to those obscure notions. From this imperfect sense of its poverty, and these feeble affections, arise some motions and efforts of the mind, like those of one groping in the dark, and seeking rest every where, but meeting with it no where. This, at least, is beyond all doubt, and indisputable, that all men wish well to themselves, nay, that they all catch at, and desire to attain the enjoyment of the most absolute and perfect good; even the worst of men have not lost this regard for themselves, nor can they possibly divest themselves of it. And though, alas! it is but too true, that, as we are naturally blind, we run ourselves upon misery, under the disguise of happiness, and not only embrace, according to the common saying, "a cloud instead of Juno†," but death itself instead of life: yet, even from this most fatal error, it is evident that we naturally pursue either real happiness, or what, to our mistaken judgment, appears to be such. Nor can the mind of man divest itself of this propensity, without divesting itself of its being. This is what the schoolmen mean, when, in their manner of expression, they say, "That the will is carried towards happiness, not simply as will, but as nature‡."

It is true, indeed, the generality of mankind are not well acquainted with the motions of their own minds, nor at pains to observe them, but, like brutes, by a kind of secret impulse, are violently carried towards such enjoyments as fall in their way: they do but very little, or not at all, enter into themselves, and review the state and operations of their own minds; yet, in all their actions, all their wishes and desires, (though they are not always aware of it themselves,) this thirst after immortality exerts and discovers itself. Consider the busy part of mankind, hurrying to and fro in the exercise of their several professions, physicians, lawyers, merchants, mechanics, farmers, and

* Cognati semina cœli.

† Nubem pro Junone.

‡ In beatitudinem fertur voluntas, non ut voluntas, sed ut natura.

even soldiers themselves; they all toil and labour, in order to obtain rest, if success attend their endeavours, and any fortunate event answer their expectations. Encouraged by these fond hopes, they eat their bread with the sweat of their brow. But their toil, after all, is endless, constantly returning in a circle; and the days of men pass away in suffering real evils, and entertaining fond hopes of apparent good, which they seldom or never attain. *Every man walks in a vain shew: he torments himself in vain.* Psal. xxxix. 6. He pursues rest and ease, like his shadow, and never overtakes them; but, for the most part, ceases to live before he begins to live to purpose. However, after all this confused and fluctuating appetite, which determines us to the pursuit of good, either real or apparent, as it is congenial with us, and deeply rooted in the human heart, so it is the great handle by which Divine Grace lays hold, as it were, upon our nature, draws us to itself, and extricates us out of the profound abyss of misery, into which we are fallen.

From this it evidently follows, that the design of Sacred Theology is the very same with that of human nature, and *he that rejects it hates his own soul;* (for so the wise king of Israel emphatically expresses it, Prov. viii. 36,) he is the most irreconcileable enemy to his own happiness, and absolutely at variance with himself; according to that of St. Bernard, "After I was set in opposition to Thee, I became also contrary to myself*."

These considerations have determined me to begin these instructions, such as they are, which, with Divine assistance, I intend to give you, concerning the principles of the Christian religion, with a short disquisition concerning the chief or ultimate end of man. And here it is to be, first of all, observed, that the transcendent and supreme end of all, is the *glory of God;* all things returning, in a most beautiful circle, to this, as the original source from which they at first took their rise. But the end of true religion, as far as it regards us, which is immediately connected with the former, and serves, in a most glorious manner, to promote it, is, the salvation and happiness of mankind.

Though I should not tell you, what is to be understood by the term *happiness* or *felicity* in general, I cannot imagine any of you would be at a loss about it. Yet, I shall give a brief explication of it, that you may have the more distinct ideas of the thing itself, and the juster notions of what is to be further advanced on the subject. Nor is there, indeed, any controversy on this head; for all are agreed, that by the terms commonly used in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin† to express happiness or felicity, we are to understand *that perfect and complete good, which is suited and adapted to intelligent nature.* I say, *to intelligent nature,* because the brute creatures cannot be said to be happy, but in a very improper sense. Happiness cannot be ascribed to horses or oxen, let them be ever so well fed, and left in the full possession of liberty and ease. And as good in general is peculiar to intelligent beings; so, more especially, that perfect good, which constitutes felicity in its full and most extensive acceptation. It is true,

* Postquam posuisti me contrarium tibi, factus sum contrarius mihi.

† אשרי in Hebrew, μακαριοτης et ευδαιμονια in Greek, *felicitas et beatitudo* in Latin.

indeed, in common conversation, men are very prodigal of this term, and, with extravagant levity, misapply it to every common enjoyment of life, or apparent good they meet with, especially such as is most suited to their present exigencies; and thus, as Aristotle, in his Ethics, expresses it, "The sick person considers health, and the poor man riches, as the chief good." It is also true, that learned men, and even the sacred Scriptures, give the name of felicity to some symptoms and small beginnings of future happiness. But, as we have already observed, this term, in its true and complete sense, comprehends in it that absolute and full perfection of good, which entirely excludes all uneasiness, and brings with it every thing that can contribute to satisfaction and delight. Consequently, that good, whatever it be, that most perfectly supplies all the wants, and satisfies all the cravings of our rational appetites, is *objective felicity*, as the schools express it: and actual, or formal felicity, is the *full possession and enjoyment of that complete and chief good*. It consists of a perfect tranquillity of the mind, and not a dull and stupid indolence, like the calm that reigns in the dead sea; but such a piece of mind as is lively, active, and constantly attended with the purest joy: not a mere absence of uneasiness and pain; but such a perfect ease as is constantly accompanied with the most perfect satisfaction, and supreme delight; and if the term had not been degraded by the mean uses to which it has been prostituted, I should not scruple to call it pleasure*. And, indeed, we may still call it by this name, provided we purify the term, and guard it by the following limitations; so as to understand by felicity, such a pleasure as is perfect, constant, pure, spiritual, and divine. For never, since I ventured to think upon such subjects, could I be satisfied with the opinion of Aristotle and the schoolmen, who distinguish between the fruition of the chief good, which constitutes true felicity, and the delight and satisfaction attending that fruition; because, at this rate, that good would not be the ultimate end and completion of our desires, nor desired on its own account: for whatever good we wish to possess, the end of our wishing is, that we may enjoy it with tranquillity and delight; and this uninterrupted delight or satisfaction, which admits of no alloy, is, love in possession of the beloved object, and at the height of its ambition.

LECTURE III.

Of the HAPPINESS *of* MAN, *and that it is really to be found.*

You will not, I imagine, be offended, nor think I intend to insult you, because I have once and again, with great earnestness and sincerity, wished you and myself a sound and serious temper of mind: for, if we may represent things as they really are, very few men are possessed of so valuable a blessing. The far greater part of them are intoxicated either with the pleasures or the cares of this world; they stagger about with a tottering and unstable pace; and, as Solomon expresses it, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them: because he knoweth*

* Ἡ ἐυδαιμονία ἡδονὴ ἀμιτακζλητὸς: Happiness in pleasure perpetuated.

not how to go to the city: Eccles. x. 15:—the heavenly city, and the vision of peace, which very few have a just notion of, or are at pains to seek after. Nay, they know not what it is they are seeking. They flutter from one object to another, and live at hazard. They have no certain harbour in view, nor direct their course by any fixed star. But to him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright. That this may not be our case, but that we may have a proper object to aim at, I propose to speak of the chief end of our being.

And to begin at the Father of Spirits, or pure intelligences, God, blessed for ever, completely happy in Himself from all eternity, is His own happiness. His self-sufficiency, [*Αυτάρκεια,*] that eternal and infinite satisfaction and complacency He has in Himself, is the peculiar and most complete felicity of that Supreme Being who derives his existence from Himself, and has given being to every thing else. Which Chrysostom has well expressed by saying, "That it is God's peculiar property to stand in need of nothing*." And Claudius Victor beautifully describes Him as "vested with all the majesty of creative power, comprehending in His infinite mind all the creatures to be afterwards produced, having all the revolutions of time constantly present to His all-seeing eye, and being an immense and most glorious kingdom to Himself†."

Yet all we can say of this Primary, Uncreated Majesty and Felicity, is but mere talking to little or no sort of purpose: for here, not only words fail us, but even thought is at a stand, and quite overpowered, when we survey the Supreme, Self-existent Being‡, perfectly happy and glorious in the sole enjoyment of His own infinite perfections, throughout numberless ages, without angels, men, or any other creature: so that the poet had reason to say, "What eye so strong, that the matchless brightness of Thy glory will not dazzle it, and make it close §."

Let us, therefore, descend into ourselves, but with a view to return to Him again: and not only so, but in such a manner, that the end and design of our descending to inquire into our own situation, be, that we may, with greater advantage, return and reascend to God. For, if we inquire into our own ultimate end, this disquisition must rise above all other beings, and at last terminate in Him; because He Himself is that very end, and out of Him, there is neither beginning nor end. The felicity of angels, which is an intermediate degree of happiness, we shall not insist on, not only because it is foreign to our

* *Θεοῦ μάλιστα ἴδιον τὸ ἀνενδεὲς.*

† Regnabatque; potens in majestate creandi,
Et facienda videns, gignendaque; mente capaci,
Secula despiciens, et quicquid tempora volvunt
Presens semper habens: immensum mole beatâ
Regnum erat ipse sibi.

‡ *Ἀνθεώμενον τὸν ὄντα.*

§ *Τίνες ὄμμα σοφὸν*
Ταῖς σαῖς στεροπαῖς
Ἀνακοστόμενον
Οὐ καμμύσται. Synes. Hym. Tert.

purpose, but also, because our felicity and theirs will be found, upon the matter, to be precisely the same.

With regard to our own happiness, we shall first shew, *that such happiness really exists;* and next, inquire, *what it is,* and wherein it consists.

We assert, then, that there is such a thing as human felicity, and this ought rather to be taken for granted as a matter unquestionable, than strictly proved. But when I speak of human felicity, I am well satisfied you will not imagine, I mean such a happiness as may be had from human things, but that I take the term subjectively, and understand by it the happiness of man. Now, he who would deny, that this is not only among the number of possibles, but actually attained by some part, at least, of the human race, would not only render himself unworthy of such happiness, but even of human nature itself; because he would thereby do all in his power to deprive it of its highest expectations and its greatest honour: but whoever allows, that all things were produced by the hand of an infinitely wise Creator, cannot possibly doubt, that man, the head and ornament of all His visible works, was made capable of a proper and suitable end. The principal beauty of the creation consists in this, that all things in it are disposed in the most excellent order, and every particular intended for some noble and suitable end; and if this could not be said of man, who is the glory of the visible world, what a great deformity must it be, how great a gap in nature! And this gap must be the greater, in that, as we have already observed, man is naturally endued with strong and vigorous desires towards such an end. Yet, on this absurd supposition, all such desires and expectations would be vain, and to no purpose; and so, something might be said in defence of that peevish and impatient expression which escaped the Psalmist in a fit of excessive sorrow, and he might have an excuse for saying, *Why hast Thou made all men in vain?* Psal. lxxxix. 47. This would not only have been a frightful gap in nature, but, if I am allowed so to speak, at this rate, the whole human race must have been created in misery, and exposed to unavoidable torments, from which they could never have been relieved, had they been formed, not only capable of a good quite unattainable and altogether without their reach, but also with strong and restless desires towards that impossible good. Now, as this is by no means to be admitted, there must necessarily be some full, permanent, and satisfying good, that may be attained by man, and in the possession of which he must be truly happy.

When we revolve these things in our minds, do we not feel from within, a powerful impulse, exciting us to set aside all other cares, that we may discover the one chief good, and attain to the enjoyment of it? While we inhabit these bodies, I own, we lie under a necessity of using corporeal and fading things: but there is no necessity that we should be slaves to our bellies and the lusts of the flesh, or have our affections glued to this earth; nay, that it should be so, is the highest and most intolerable indignity. Can it be thought, that man was born merely to cram himself with victuals and drink, or gratify the other appetites of a body which he has in common with the brutes? to snuff up the wind, to entertain delusive and vain hopes all the days of his life, and,

when that short scene of madness is over, to be laid in the grave, and reduced to its original dust? Far be it from us to draw such conclusions: there is certainly something beyond this, something so great and lasting, that, in respect of it, the short point of time we live here, with all its bustle of business and pleasures, is more empty and vanishing than smoke. "I am more considerable," says one, "and born to greater matters, than to become the slave of my diminutive body *." With how much greater truth might we speak thus, were we regenerated from Heaven! Let us be ashamed to live with our heads bowed down, like grovelling beasts gazing upon the earth, or even to catch at the vain and airy shadows of science, while, in the mean time, we know not, or do not consider, whence we took our rise, and whither we are soon to return, what place is to receive our souls, when they are set at liberty from these bodily prisons. If it is the principal desire of your souls to understand the nature of this felicity, and the way that leads to it, *search the Scriptures;* for, *from them* alone, *we* all *think*, or profess to think, *we can have eternal life.* I exhort and beseech you, never to suffer so much as one day to pass, either through lazy negligence or too much eagerness in inferior studies, without reading some part of the sacred records with a pious and attentive disposition of mind; still joining with your reading, fervent prayer, that you may thereby draw down that Divine light, without which spiritual things cannot be read and understood. But with this light shining upon them, it is not possible to express how much sweeter you will find these inspired writings, than Cicero, Demosthenes, Homer, Aristotle, and all the other orators, poets, and philosophers. They reason about an imaginary felicity, and every one in his own way advances some precarious and uncertain thoughts upon it; but *this* Book alone shows clearly, and with absolute certainty, what it is, and points out the way that leads to the attainment of it. This is that which prevailed with St. Augustine to study the Scriptures, and engaged his affection to them. "In Cicero, and Plato, and other such writers," says he, "I meet with many things wittily said, and things that have a moderate tendency to move the passions; but in none of them do I find these words, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* †."

LECTURE IV.

In which it is proved that Human Felicity cannot be found either in the earth or earthly things.

WE are all in quest of one thing, but almost all of us out of the right road; therefore, to be sure, the longer and the more swiftly we move in a wrong path, the further we depart from the object of our desires: and if it is so, we can speak or think of nothing more proper and seasonable, than of inquiring about the only right way, whereby we may all come, "to see the bright fountain of goodness ‡." I know you will

* Major sum, et ad majora gentius, quam ut sim mancipium mei corpusculi.

† Apud Ciceronem et Platonem, aliosque ejusmodi scriptores, multa sunt acute dicta, et leniter calentias sed in iis omnibus hoc non invenio, *Venite ad me*, &c. [MATT. xii. 28.]

‡ Boni fontem visere lucidum.

remember, that on the last occasion, we proposed the most important of all questions, *viz.*, that concerning our ultimate end, or the way to discover true happiness; to which, we asserted, that all mankind do aspire with a natural, and therefore a constant and uniform ardour; or rather, we supposed, that all are sufficiently acquainted with this happiness, nay, really do, or at least may feel it within them, if they thoroughly know themselves. For this is the end of the labours of men; to this tend all their toils. This is the general aim of all, not only of the sharp-sighted, but the blear-eyed and short-sighted; nay even of those that are quite blind, who though they cannot see the mark they propose to themselves, yet are in hopes of reaching it at last: that is to say, though their ideas of it are very confused and imperfect, they all desire happiness in the obvious sense of the word. We have also observed, that this term, in its general acceptation, imports that full and perfect good which is suited to intelligent nature*. It is not to be doubted but the felicity of the Deity, as well as His being, is in Himself, and from Himself. But our inquiry is concerning our own happiness. We also positively determined, that there is some blessed end suited and adapted to our nature, and that this can by no means be denied; for since all parts of the universe have proper ends suited and adapted to their natures, that the most noble and excellent creature of the whole sublunary world should in this be defective, and therefore created in vain, would be so great a solecism, such a deformity in the whole fabric, and so unworthy of the supreme and all-wise Creator, that it can by no means be admitted, nor even so much as imagined. This point being settled, *viz.*, that there is some determinate good, in the possession whereof the mind of man may be fully satisfied and at perfect rest, we now proceed to inquire what this good is, and where it may be found.

The first thing, and at the same time a very considerable step towards this discovery, will be to show where and in what things this perfect good is *not* to be found; not only because this point being settled, it will be easier to determine wherein it actually consists; nay, the latter will naturally flow from the former; but also because, as has been observed, we shall find the far greater part of mankind pursuing vain shadows and phantoms of happiness, and, throughout their whole lives, wandering in a great variety of bye-paths, seeking the way to make a proper improvement of life, almost always hunting for that chief good where it is not to be found. They must first be recalled from this rambling and fruitless course, before they can possibly be directed into the right road. I shall not spin out this negative proposition by dividing the subject of it into several branches, and insisting separately upon every one of them; but consider all these errors and mistakes, both vulgar and practical, speculative and philosophical, however numerous they may be, as comprehended under one general head, and fully obviate them all by one single proposition, which with Divine assistance, I shall explain to you in this lecture, and that very briefly.

The proposition is, That human felicity, or that full and complete

* Πρῶτόν τι, ἰκανόν τι, καὶ μέγιστον καλόν.

good that is suited to the nature of man, is not to be found in the earth, nor in earthly things.

Now, what if, instead of further proof or illustration, I should only say—If this perfect felicity is to be found within this visible world, or the verge of this earthly life, let him, I pray, who hath found it out, stand forth; let him tell who can, what star, of whatever magnitude, what constellation or combination of stars, has so favourable an aspect, and so benign an influence, or what is that singular good, or assemblage of good things in this earth, that can confer upon mankind a happy life. All things that, like bright stars, have hitherto attracted the eyes of men, vanishing in a few days, have proved themselves to be comets, not only of no benign, but even of pernicious influence: according to the saying, "There is no comet but what brings some mischief along with it*." All that have ever lived during so many ages that the world has hitherto lasted, noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned, fools and wise men, have gone in search of happiness: has ever any one of them all, in times past, or is there any one at this day that has said, Εὕρηκα, I have found it? Different men have given different definitions and descriptions of it, and according to their various turns of mind, have painted it in a great variety of shapes; but, since the creation of the world, there has not been so much as one who ever pretended to say, Here it is, I have it, and have attained the full possession of it. Even those from whom most was to be expected, men of the utmost penetration, and most properly qualified for such researches, after all their labour and industry, have acknowledged their disappointment, and that they had not found it. But it would be wonderful indeed, that there should be any good suited to human nature, and to which mankind were born, and yet that it never fell to the share of any one individual of the sons of men: unless it be said, that the things of life, in this respect, resemble the speculations of the schools; and that, as they talk about objects of knowledge that were never known, so there is some good attainable by men, which was never actually attained.

But to look a little more narrowly into this matter, and take a transient view of the several periods of life. Infants are so far from attaining to happiness, that they have not yet arrived at human life; yet, if they are compared with those of riper years, they are in a low and improper sense, with regard to two things, innocence and ignorance, happier than men; for there is nothing that years add to infancy so invariably, and in so great abundance, as guilt and pollution; and the experience and knowledge of the world which they give us, do not so much improve the head, as they vex and distress the heart. So that the great man represented in the tragedy embracing his infant who knew nothing of his own misery, seems to have had some reason to say, "That those who know nothing enjoy the happiest life†." And to be sure, what we gain by our progress from infancy to youth, is, that we thereby become more exposed to the miseries of life, and, as we improve in the knowledge of things, our pains and torments are also increased: for either children are put to servile employments, or me-

* Οὐδεὶς γὰρ κομήτης ὅστις οὐ κακὸν φέρει.

† Τὸ γνῶναι μηδὲν ἐστιν ἡδιστος βίος.

chanic arts; or if they happen to have a more genteel and liberal education, this very thing turns to a punishment, as they are thereby subjected to rods and chastisements, and the power of parents and instructors, which is often a kind of petty tyranny; and, when the yoke is lightened with the greatest prudence, it still seems hard to be borne, as it is above the capacity of their young minds, thwarts their wishes and inclinations, and encroaches upon their beloved liberty.

Youth, put in full possession of this liberty, for the most part ceases to be master of itself; nor can it be truly said to be delivered from its former misery, as to exchange it for a worse, even that very liberty. It leaves the harbour to sail through quicksands and Sirens; and when both these are passed, launches out into the deep sea. Alas! to what various fates is it there exposed! How many contrary winds does it meet with! How many storms threatening it with shipwreck! How many shocks has it to bear from avarice, ambition, and envy, either in consequence of the violent stirrings of those passions within itself, or the fierce attacks of them from without! Amidst all these tempests, the ship is either early overwhelmed, or broken by storms; and worn out by old age, at last falls to pieces.

Nor does it much signify what state of life one enters into, or what rank he holds in human society; for all forms of business and conditions of life, however various you may suppose them to be, are exposed to a much greater variety of troubles and distresses, some to pressures more numerous and more grievous than others, but all to a great many, and every one to some peculiar to itself. If you devote yourself to ease and retirement, you cannot avoid the reproach and uneasiness that constantly attend an indolent, a useless, and lazy life. If you engage in business, whatever it be, whether you commence merchant, soldier, farmer, or lawyer, you always meet with toil and hazard, and often with heavy misfortunes and losses. Celibacy exposes to solitude; marriage, to solicitude and cares. Without learning, you appear plain and unpolished; but on the other hand, the study of letters is a matter of immense labour, and, for the most part, brings in but very little, either with regard to the knowledge you acquire by it, or the conveniences of life it procures. But I will enlarge no further. You find the Greek and Latin poets lamenting the calamities of life in many parts of their works, and at great length: nor do they exaggerate in the least; they even fall short of the truth, and only enumerate a few evils out of many.

The Greek epigram ascribed by some to Prosidipus, by others to Crates the Cynic philosopher, begins thus, "What state of life ought one to choose?" and having enumerated them all, concludes in this manner: "There are then only two things eligible, either never to have been born, or to die as soon as one makes his appearance in the world*."

But now, leaving the various periods and conditions of life, let us, with great brevity, run over those things which are looked upon to be the greatest blessings in it, and see whether any of them can make it

* Ποιην τοι βιότοιο τάμοις τρίβον.—Εστ' ἀρω τοῖν δυοῖν ἕνος αἵρεσις ἢ τό γενεσθαι μεδεποτ ἢ θανεῖν ἀυτίκα τικτομαινον.

completely happy. Can this be expected from a beautiful outside? No; this has rendered many miserable, but never made one happy. For suppose it to be sometimes attended with innocence, it is surely of a fading and perishing nature, "the sport of time or disease *." Can it be expected from riches?" Surely no; for how little of them does the owner possess, even supposing his wealth to be ever so great! What a small part of them does he use or enjoy himself! And what has he of the rest but the pleasure of seeing them with his eyes? Let his table be loaded with the greatest variety of delicious dishes, he fills his belly out of one; and if he has a hundred beds he lies but in one of them. Can the kingdoms, thrones, and sceptres of this world, confer happiness? No: we learn from the histories of all ages, that not a few have been tumbled down from these by sudden and unexpected revolutions, and those not such as were void of conduct or courage, but men of great and extraordinary abilities. And that those who met with no such misfortunes, were still far enough from happiness, is very plain from the situation of their affairs, and in many cases, from their own confession. The saying of Augustus is well known: "I wish I had never been married and had died childless †." And the expression of Severus at his death, "I became all things, and yet it does not profit me ‡." But the most noted saying of all, and that which best deserves to be known, is that of the wisest and most flourishing king, as well as the greatest preacher, who, having exactly computed all the advantages of his exalted dignity and royal opulence, found this to be the sum total of all, and left it on record for the inspection of posterity and future ages, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

All this may possibly be true with regard to the external advantages of men; but may not happiness be found in the internal goods of the mind, such as wisdom and virtue? Suppose this granted; still that they may confer perfect felicity, they must of necessity be perfect themselves. Now, shew me the man, who, even in his own judgment, has attained to perfection in wisdom and virtue: even those who were accounted the wisest, and actually were so, acknowledged they knew nothing! nor was there one among the most approved philosophers, whose virtues were not allayed with many blemishes. The same must be said of piety and true religion, which, though it is the beginning of felicity, and tends directly to perfection, yet, as in this earth it is not full and complete in itself, it cannot make its possessors perfectly happy. The knowledge of the most exalted minds is very obscure, and almost quite dark, and their practice of virtue lame and imperfect. And indeed, who can have the boldness to boast of perfection in this respect, when he hears the great Apostle complaining of *the law of the flesh*, and pathetically exclaiming, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Rom. vii. 24. Besides, though wisdom and virtue, or piety were perfect, so long as we have bodies, we must at the same time have all bodily advantages, in order to perfect felicity. Therefore, the Satirist smartly ridicules the wise man of the Stoics: "He is,"

* Χρόνου ἢ νόσου παιγνιον.

† Αἴθ' ὄφελον ἄγαμός τ' ἔμεναι ἄγονός τ' ἀπολεσαι.

‡ Πάντα ἐγενόμην καὶ οὐ λυσιτελεῖ.

says he, "free, honoured, beautiful, king of kings and particularly happy, except when he is troubled with phlegm *."

Since these things are so, we must raise our minds higher, and not live with our heads bowed down like the common sort of mankind; who, as St. Augustine expresses it, "look for a happy life in the region of death †." To set our hearts upon the perishing goods of this wretched life and its muddy pleasures, is not the happiness of men, but of hogs. And if pleasure is dirt, other things are but smoke. Were this the only good proposed to the desires and hopes of men, it would not have been so great a privilege to have been born. Be therefore advised, young gentlemen, and beware of this poisonous cup, lest your minds thereby become brutish, and fall into a fatal oblivion of your original, and your end. Turn that part of your Composition which is Divine, to God its creator and father, without whom we can neither be happy, nor indeed *be* at all.

LECTURE V.

Of the IMMORTALITY *of the* SOUL.

THERE are many things that keep mankind employed, particularly business, or rather trifles; for so the affairs which are in this world considered as most important, ought to be called, when compared with that of minding our own valuable concerns, knowing ourselves, and truly consulting our highest interests; but how few are there that make this their study? The definition you commonly give of man, is, that he is a rational creature; though to be sure, it is not applicable to the generality of mankind, unless you understand, that they are such, not actually, but in power only, and that very remote. They are, for the most part at least, more silly and foolish than children, and, like them, fond of toys, and rattles; they fatigue themselves running about and sauntering from place to place, but do nothing to purpose.

What a wonder it is, that souls of a heavenly original have so far forgot their native country, and are so immersed in dirt and mud, that there are few men who frequently converse with themselves about their own state, thinking gravely of their original and their end, seriously laying to heart, that as the poet expresses it, "Good and evil are set before mankind ‡;" and who after mature consideration, not only think it the most wise and reasonable course, but are also fully resolved to exert themselves to the utmost, in order to arrive at a sovereign contempt of earthly things, and aspire to those enjoyments that are Divine and eternal. For our parts, I am fully persuaded we shall be of this mind, if we seriously reflect upon what has been said. For if there is, of necessity, a complete, permanent, and satisfying good intended for man, and no such good is to be found in the earth or earthly

* ——————— Dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum,
Præcipue fœlix, nisi cum pituita molesta est.

† Beatam vitam quærunt in regione mortis.

‡ Ὡτι τοι ανθρωποισι κακων τ' αγαθων τε τιτυνται.

things, we must proceed farther, and look for it somewhere else; and, in consequence of this, conclude, that man is not quite extinguished by death, but removes to another place, and that the human soul is by all means immortal.

Many men have added a great variety of different arguments to support this conclusion, some of them strong and solid, and others, to speak freely, too metaphysical, and of little strength, especially as they are as obscure, as easily denied, and as hard to be proved, as that very conclusion, in support of which they are adduced.

They who reason from the immaterial nature of the soul, and from its being infused into the body, as also from its method of operation, which is confined to none of the bodily organs, may easily prevail with those who believe these principles, to admit the truth of the conclusion they want to draw from them; but if they meet with any who obstinately deny the premises, or even doubt the truth of them, it will be a matter of difficulty to support such hypotheses with clear and conclusive arguments. If the soul of man was well acquainted with itself, and fully understood its own nature, if it could investigate the nature of its union with the body, and the method of its operation therein, we doubt not but from thence it might draw these and other such arguments of its immortality; but since, shut up in the prison of a dark body, it is so little known, and so incomprehensible to itself, and since, in so great obscurity, it can scarce, if at all, discover the least of its own features and complexion, it would be a very difficult matter for it to say much concerning its internal nature, or nicely determine the methods of its operation. But it would be surprising, if any one should deny, that the very operations it performs, especially those of the more noble and exalted sort, are strong marks and conspicuous characters of its excellence and immortality.

Nothing is more evident than that, besides life, and sense, and animal spirits, which he has in common with the brutes, there is in man something more exalted, more pure, and that more nearly approaches to Divinity. God has given to the former a sensitive soul, but to us a mind also; and, to speak distinctly, that spirit which is peculiar to man, and whereby he is raised above all other animals, ought to be called mind rather than soul *. Be this as it may, it is hardly possible to say, how vastly the human mind excels the other with regard to its wonderful powers, and, next to them, with respect to its works, devices, and inventions. For it performs such great and wonderful things, that the brutes, even those of the greatest sagacity, can neither imitate, nor at all understand, much less invent. Nay, man, though he is much less in bulk, and inferior in strength to the greatest part of them, yet, as Lord and king of them all, he can, by surprising means, bend and apply the strength and industry of all the other creatures, the virtues of all herbs and plants, and, in a word, all the parts and powers of this visible world, to the convenience and accommodation of his own life. He also builds cities, erects commonwealths, makes laws, conducts armies, fits out fleets, measures not

* Animus potius dicendus est quam anima.

only the earth, but the heavens also, and investigates the motions of the stars. He foretels eclipses many years before they happen; and, with very little difficulty, sends his thoughts to a great distance, bids them visit the remotest cities and countries, mount above the sun and the stars, and even the heavens themselves.

But all these things are inconsiderable, and contribute but little to our present purpose, in respect of that one incomparable dignity that results to the human mind from its being capable of religion, and having indelible characters thereof naturally stamped upon it. It acknowledges a God, and worships Him; it builds temples to His honour; it celebrates His never enough exalted majesty with sacrifices, prayers, and praises; depends upon His bounty; implores His aid; and so carries on a constant correspondence with Heaven: and, which is a very strong proof of its being originally from Heaven, it hopes at last to return to it. And, truly, in my judgment, this previous impression and hope of immortality, and these earnest desires after it, are a very strong evidence of that immortality. These impressions, though in most men they lie overpowered and almost quite extinguished by the weight of their bodies, and an extragavant love to present enjoyments; yet, now and then, in time of adversity, break forth and exert themselves, especially under the pressure of severe distempers, and at the approaches of death. But those whose minds are purified, and their thoughts habituated to Divine things, with what constant and ardent wishes do they breathe after that blessed immortality! How often do their souls complain within them, that they have dwelt so long in these earthly tabernacles! Like exiles, they earnestly wish, make interest, and struggle hard to regain their native country. Moreover, does not that noble neglect of the body and its senses, and that contempt of all the pleasures of the flesh, which these heavenly souls have attained, evidently shew, that, in a short time, they will be taken from hence, and that the body and soul are of a very different, and almost contrary nature to one another; that, therefore, the duration of the one depends not upon the other, but is quite of another kind; and that the soul, set at liberty from the body, is not only exempted from death, but, in some sense, then begins to live, and then first sees the light? Had we not this hope to support us, what ground should we have to lament our first nativity, which placed us in a life so short, so destitute of good, and so crowded with miseries; a life which we pass entirely in grasping phantoms of felicity, and suffering real calamities! So that if there were not, beyond this, a life and happiness that more truly deserves these names, who can help seeing, that, of all creatures, man would be the most miserable, and, of all men, the best the most unhappy?

For, although every wise man looks upon the belief of the immortality of the soul, as one of the great and principal supports of religion, there may possibly be some rare, exalted, and truly divine minds, who would choose the pure and noble path of virtue for its own sake, would constantly walk in it, and, out of love to it, would not decline the severest hardships, if they should happen to be exposed to them on its account. Yet, it cannot be denied, that the common sort of Christians, though they are really and at heart sound believers

and true Christians, fall very far short of this attainment, and would scarcely, if at all, embrace virtue and religion, if you take away the rewards; which, I think the Apostle Paul hints at in this expression, *If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable.* 1 Cor. xv. 19. The Apostle, indeed, does not intend these words as a direct proof of the immortality of the soul in a separate state, but an argument to prove the resurrection of the body; which is a doctrine near akin, and closely connected with the former. For that great restoration is added as an instance of the superabundance and immensity of the Divine goodness, whose pleasure it is, that not only the better and more divine part of man, which, upon its return to its original Source, is, without the body, capable of enjoying a perfectly happy and eternal life, should have a glorious immortality, but also that this earthly tabernacle, as being the faithful attendant and constant companion of the soul through all its toils and labours in this world, be also admitted to a share and participation of its heavenly and eternal felicity; that so, according to our Lord's expression, every faithful soul may have returned into its bosom, *good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.* Luke vi. 38.

Let our belief of this immortality be founded entirely on Divine Revelation, and then like a city fortified with a rampart of earth drawn round it, let it be outwardly guarded and defended by reason; which, in this case, suggests arguments as strong and convincing as the subject will admit of. If any one, in the present case, promises demonstration, his undertaking is certainly too much; if he desires or expects it from another, he requires too much. There are, indeed, very few demonstrations in philosophy, if you except mathematical sciences, that can be truly and strictly so called, and, if we inquire narrowly into the matter, perhaps we shall find none at all: nay, if even the mathematical demonstrations are examined by the strict rules and ideas of Aristotle, the greatest part of them will be found imperfect and defective. The saying of that philosopher is, therefore, wise and applicable to many cases: "Demonstrations are not to be expected in all cases, but so far as the subject will admit of them*." But if we were well acquainted with the nature and essence of the soul, or even its precise method of operation on the body, it is highly probable we could draw from thence evident and undeniable demonstrations of that immortality which we are now asserting: whereas, so long as the mind of man is so little acquainted with its own nature, we must not expect any such.

But that unquenchable thirst of the soul, which we have already mentioned, is a strong proof of its Divine nature; a thirst not to be allayed with the impure and turbid waters of any earthly good, or of all worldly enjoyments taken together. It thirsts after the never-failing Fountain of good, according to that of the Psalmist, *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks:* it thirsts after a good, invisible, immaterial, and immortal, to the enjoyment whereof the ministry of a body is so far from being absolutely necessary, that it feels itself shut up and confined by that to which it is now united, as by a partition-

* Οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀποδείξεις ἀνιτήτεον, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅσον δέχεται τό ὑποκείμενον.

wall, and groans under the pressure of it. And those souls that are quite insensible of this thirst, are certainly buried in the body, as in the carcass of an impure hog; nor have they so entirely divested themselves of this appetite we have mentioned, nor can they possibly so divest themselves of it, as not to feel it severely, to their great misery, sooner or later, either when they awake out of their lethargy within the body, or when they are obliged to leave it. To conclude: Nobody, I believe, will deny, that we are to form our judgment of the true nature of the human mind, not from the sloth and stupidity of the most degenerate and vilest of men, but from the sentiments and fervent desires of the best and wisest of the species.

These sentiments concerning the immortality of the soul in its future existence, not only include no impossibility or absurdity in them, but are also every way agreeable to sound reason, wisdom, and virtue, to the Divine economy, and the natural wishes and desires of men. Wherefore, most nations have, with the greatest reason, universally adopted them, and the wisest in all countries and in all ages, have cheerfully embraced them; and though they could not confirm them with any argument of irresistible force, yet they felt something within them that corresponded with this doctrine, and always looked upon it as most beautiful and worthy of credit. "Nobody," says Atticus in Cicero, "shall drive me from the immortality of the soul*." And Seneca's words are, "I took pleasure to inquire into the eternity of the soul, and even, indeed to believe it. I resigned myself to so glorious an hope, for now I begin to despise the remains of a broken constitution, as being to remove into that immensity of time, and into the possession of endless ages†." O how much does the soul gain by this removal!

As for you, young gentlemen, I doubt not but you will embrace this doctrine, not only as agreeable to reason, but as it is an article of the Christian faith. I only put you in mind to revolve it often within yourselves, and with a serious disposition of mind; for you will find it the strongest incitement to wisdom, good morals, and true piety. Nor can you imagine any thing that will more effectually divert you from a foolish admiration of present and perishing things, and from the allurements and sordid pleasures of this earthly body. Consider, I pray you, how unbecoming it is, to make a heaven-born soul, that is to live for ever, a slave to the meanest, vilest, and most trifling things; and, as it were to thrust down to the kitchen a prince that is obliged to leave his country only for a short time. St. Bernard pathetically addresses himself to the body in favour of the soul, persuading it to treat the latter honourably, not only on account of its dignity, but also for the advantage that will thereby redound to the body itself: "Thou hast a noble guest, O flesh! a most noble one indeed, and all thy safety depends upon its salvation: it will certainly remember thee for good, if thou serve it well; and when it comes to its Lord, it will put him in mind of thee, and the mighty God himself will come to

* Me nemo de immortalitate depellet.

† Juvabat de æternitate animarum quærere, imo mehercule credere: dabam me spei tantæ; jam enim reliquias infractæ ætatis contemnebam, in immensum illud tempus, et in possessionem omnis ævi transiturus. Sen. Epis. 102.

make thee who art now a vile body, like unto his glorious one; and, O wretched flesh, He who came in humility and obscurity to redeem souls, will come in great majesty to glorify thee, and every eye shall see him*." Be mindful, therefore, young gentlemen, of your better part, and accustom it to think of its own eternity, always and every where having its eyes fixed upon that world to which it is most nearly related. And thus it will look down, as from on high, on all those things which the world considers as lofty and exalted, and will see them under its feet; and of all the things which are confined within the narrow verge of this present life, it will have nothing to desire, and nothing to fear.

LECTURE VI.

Of the HAPPINESS *of the* LIFE *to come.*

OF all the thoughts of men, there is certainly none that more often occur to a serious mind that has its own interest at heart, than that to which all others are subordinate and subservient, with regard to the intention, the ultimate and most desirable end, of all our toils and cares, and even of life itself. And this important thought will the more closely beset the mind, the more sharp-sighted it is in prying into the real torments, the delusive hopes, and the false joys of this our wretched state; which is indeed so miserable, that it can never be sufficiently lamented; and as for laughter amidst so many sorrows, dangers and fears, it must be considered as downright madness. Such was the opinion of the wisest of kings: *I have said of laughter*, says he, *It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it?* Eccl. ii. 2. We have, therefore, no cause to be much surprised at the bitter complaints which a grievous weight of afflictions has extorted, even from great and good men: nay, it is rather a wonder, if the same causes do not often oblige us to repeat them.

If we look about us, how often are we shocked to observe either the calamities of our country, or the sad disasters of our relations and friends, whom we have daily occasion to mourn, either as groaning under the pressure of poverty, pining away under languishing diseases, tortured by acute ones, or carried off by death, while we ourselves are, in like manner, very soon to draw tears from the eyes of others! Nay, how often are we a burden to ourselves, and groan heavily under afflictions of our own, that press hard upon our estates, our bodies, or our minds! Even those who seem to meet with the fewest and the least inconveniencies in this life, and dazzle the eyes of spectators with the brightness of a seemingly constant and uniform felicity, besides that they often suffer from secret vexations and cares which destroy their inward peace, and prey upon their distressed hearts, how uncertain, weak, and brittle is that false happiness which appears about them, and, when it shines brightest, how easily is it

* Nobilem hospitem habes, O caro! nobilem valde, et tota tua salus de ejus salute pendet: omnino etiam memor erit tui in bonum, si bene servieris illi; et cum pervenerit ad Dominum suum, suggeret ei de te, et veniet ipse Dominus virtutum, et te vile corpus configurabit corpori suo glorioso, qui ad animas redimendas humilis ante venerat, et occultus, pro te glorificando, O misera caro, sublimis veniet et manifestus.

broken to pieces! So that it has been justly said, "They want another felicity to secure that which they are already possessed of *." If, after all, there are some whose minds are hardened against all the forms and appearances of external things, and who look down with equal contempt upon all the events of this world, whether of a dreadful or an engaging aspect, even this disposition of mind does not make them happy: nor do they think themselves so; they have still something to make them uneasy, the obscure darkness that overspreads their minds, their ignorance of heavenly things, and the strength of their carnal affections, not yet entirely subdued. And though these we are now speaking of, are by far the noblest and most beautiful part of the human race, yet, if they had not within them that blessed hope of removing hence, in a little time, to the regions of light, the more severely they feel the straits and afflictions to which their souls are exposed by being shut up in this narrow earthly cottage, so much they certainly would be more miserable than the rest of mankind.

As oft, therefore, as we reflect upon these things, we shall find that the whole comes to this one conclusion: "There is certainly some end †;"—there is, to be sure, some end suited to the nature of man, and worthy of it; some particular, complete, and permanent good; and since we in vain look for it within the narrow verge of this life, and among the many miseries that swarm on it from beginning to end, we must of necessity conclude, that there is certainly some more fruitful country, and a more lasting life, to which our felicity is reserved, and into which we shall be received when we remove hence. This is not our rest, nor have we any place of residence here: it is the region of fleas and gnats; and while we search for happiness among these mean and perishing things, we are not only sure to be disappointed, but also not to escape those miseries which, in great numbers, continually beset us. So that we may apply to ourselves the saying of the famous artist confined in the island of Crete, and truly say, "The earth and the sea are shut up against us, and neither of them can favour our escape: the way to heaven is alone open, and this way we will strive to go ‡."

Thus far we have advanced by degrees, and very lately we have discoursed upon the immortality of the soul, to which we have added the resurrection of our earthly body, by way of appendix. It remains that we now inquire into the happiness of the life to come.

Yet, I own, I am almost deterred from entering upon this inquiry by the vast obscurity and sublimity of the subject, which in its nature is such, that we can neither understand it, nor, if we could, can it be expressed in words. The divine Apostle, who had had some glimpse of this felicity, describes it no otherwise than by his silence, calling the words he heard, *unspeakable, and such as it was not lawful for a man to utter* §. 2 Cor. xii. 4. And if *he* neither could nor would express what he saw, far be it from us boldly to force ourselves into or intrude

* Alia felicitate ad illam felicitatem tuendam opus est.

† Ἐστίν ὡρα τέλος.

‡ Nec tellus nostræ, nec patet unda fugæ,
Restat iter cœli, cœlo tentabimus ire.

§ "Ἀῤῥητα ῥήματα, ἃ, οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι.

upon what we have seen; especially as the same Apostle, in another place, acquaints us, for our future caution, that this was unwarrantably done by some rash and forward persons in his own time. But since in the sacred archives of this new world, however invisible and unknown to us, we have some maps and descriptions of it suited to our capacity: we are not only allowed to look at them, but as they were drawn for that very purpose, it would certainly be the greatest ingratitude, as well as the highest negligence in us, not to make some improvement of them. Here, however, we must remember, what a great odds there is between the description of a kingdom in a small and imperfect map, and the extent and beauty of that very kingdom when viewed by the traveller's eye; and how much greater the difference must be, between the felicity of that heavenly kingdom to which we are aspiring, and all, even the most striking figurative expressions, taken from the things of this earth, that are used to convey some faint and imperfect notion of it to our minds. What are these things, the false glare and shadows whereof, in this earth, are pursued with such keen and furious impetuosity, riches, honours, pleasures? All these, in their justest, purest, and sublimest sense are comprehended in this blessed life: it is *a treasure*, that can neither fail nor be carried away by force or fraud: it is *an inheritance* uncorrupted and undefiled; *a crown* that fadeth not away; a never-failing stream of joy and delight: it is a marriage-feast, and of all others the most joyous and most sumptuous; one that always satisfies, and never cloys the appetite: it is an eternal spring, and an everlasting light, a day without an evening: it is a paradise, where the lilies are always white and in full bloom, the saffron blooming, the trees sweat out their balsams, and the tree of life in the midst thereof: it is a city, where the houses are built of living pearls, the gates, of precious stones, and the streets paved with the purest gold. Yet, all these are nothing but veils of the happiness to be revealed on that most blessed day: nay, the light itself, which we have mentioned among the rest, though it be the most beautiful ornament in this visible world, is at best but a shadow of that heavenly glory; and how small soever that portion of this inaccessible brightness may be, which, in the sacred Scriptures, shines upon us through these veils, it certainly very well deserves that we should often turn our eyes towards it, and view it with the closest attention.

1. Now, the first that necessarily occurs in the constitution of happiness, is a full and complete deliverance from every evil, and every grievance; which we may as certainly expect to meet with in that heavenly life, as it is impossible to be attained while we sojourn here below. All tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and every cause and occasion of tears for ever removed from our sight. There, there are no tumults, no wars, no poverty, no death, nor disease; there, there is neither mourning, nor fear, nor sin, which is the source and fountain of all other evils: there is neither violence within doors nor without, nor any complaint, in the streets of that blessed city. There, no friend goes out, nor enemy comes in.

2. Full vigour of body and mind, health, beauty, purity, and perfect tranquillity.

3. The most delightful society of angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs,

and all the saints; among whom there are no reproaches, contentions, controversies, nor party-spirit, because there are, there, none of the sources whence they can spring, nor any thing to encourage their growth; for there is, there, particularly, no ignorance, no blind self-love, no vain-glory nor envy, which is quite excluded from those divine regions; but, on the contrary, perfect charity, whereby every one, together with his own felicity, enjoys that of his neighbours, and is happy in the one as well as the other; hence there is among them a kind of infinite reflection and multiplication of happiness, like that of a spacious hall adorned with gold and precious stones, dignified with a full assembly of kings and potentates, and having its walls quite covered with the brightest looking-glasses.

4. But what infinitely exceeds, and quite eclipses all the rest, is that boundless ocean of happiness, which results from the beatific vision of the ever-blessed God; without which, neither the tranquillity they enjoy, nor the society of saints, nor the possession of any particular finite good, nor indeed of all such taken together, can satisfy the soul, or make it completely happy. The manner of this enjoyment we can only expect to understand, when we enter upon the full possession of it; till then, to dispute and raise many questions about it, is nothing but vain, foolish talking, and fighting with phantoms of our own brain. But the schoolmen, who confine the whole of this felicity to bare speculation, or as they call it, *Actus intellectualis*, an *intellectual act*, are, in this, as in many other cases, guilty of great presumption, and their conclusion is built upon a very weak foundation. For although contemplation be the highest and noblest act of the mind, yet, complete happiness necessarily requires some present good suited to the whole man, the whole soul, and all its faculties. Nor is it any objection to this doctrine, that the whole of this felicity is commonly comprehended in Scripture under the term of *vision;* for the mental vision, or contemplation of the primary and infinite good, most properly signifies, or at least includes in it, the full enjoyment of that good; and the observation of the Rabbins concerning scripture phrases, "That words expressing the senses, include also the affections naturally arising from those sensations *," is very well known. Thus *knowing* is often put for approving and loving; and *seeing* for enjoying and attaining. *Taste and see that God is good*, says the Psalmist. And in fact, it is no small pleasure to lovers, to dwell together, and mutually to enjoy the sight of one another. "Nothing is more agreeable to lovers, than to live together †."

We must, therefore, by all means conclude, that this beatific vision includes in it not only a distinct and intuitive knowledge of God, but so to speak, such a knowledge as gives us the enjoyment of that most perfect Being, and, in some sense, unites us to Him; for such a vision, it must, of necessity, be, that converts that love of the Infinite Good which blazes in the souls of the saints, into full possession; that crowns all their wishes, and fills them with an abundant and overflowing fulness of joy, that vents itself in everlasting blessings and songs of praise.

* Verba sensus connotant affectus.

† Οὐδὲν οὕτω πὼν φίλων ως το συζῆν.

And this is the only doctrine, if you believe it, (and I make no doubt but you do,) this, I say, is the only doctrine that will transport your whole souls, and raise them up on high. Hence you will learn to trample under feet all the turbid and muddy pleasures of the flesh, and all the allurements and splendid trifles of the present world. However those earthly enjoyments that are swelled up by false names and the strength of imagination, to a vast size, may appear grand and beautiful, and still greater and more engaging to those that are unacquainted with them; how small, how inconsiderable do they all appear to a soul that looks for a heavenly country, that expects to share the joys of angels, and has its thoughts constantly employed about these objects! To conclude, the more the soul withdraws, so to speak, from the body, and retires within itself, the more it rises above itself, and the more closely it cleaves to God, the more the life it lives in this earth resembles that which it will enjoy in Heaven, and the larger foretastes it has of the first-fruits of that blessed harvest. Aspire, therefore, to holiness, young gentlemen, *without which no man shall see the Lord.*

LECTURE VII.

Of the Being *of* God.

Though on most subjects, the opinions of men are various, and often quite opposite, insomuch that they seem to be more remarkable for the vast variety of their sentiments, than that of their faces and languages; there are, however, two things, wherein all nations are agreed, and in which there seems to be a perfect harmony throughout the whole human race, *the desire of happiness* and *a sense of religion.* The former, no man desires to shake off: and though some, possibly, would willingly part with the latter, it is not in their power to eradicate it entirely: they cannot banish God altogether out of their thoughts, nor extinguish every spark of religion within them. It is certainly true, that, for the most part, this desire of happiness wanders in darkness from one object to another without fixing upon any; and the sense of religion is either suffered to lie inactive, or deviates into superstition. Yet, the great Creator of the world employs these two, as the materials of a fallen building, to repair the ruins of the human race, and as handles whereby He draws his earthen vessel out of the deep gulf of misery into which it is fallen.

Of the former of these, that is, felicity, we have already spoken on another occasion: we shall therefore now, with Divine assistance, employ some part of our time in considering that sense of religion which is naturally impressed on the mind of man.

Nor will our labour, I imagine, be unprofitably employed in collecting together those few general principles in which so many, and so very dissimilar forms of religion and sentiments, extremely different, harmoniously agree; for, as every science most properly begins with universal propositions and things more generally known, so, in the present case, besides the other advantages, it will be no small support to a weak and wavering mind, that amidst all the disputes and con-

tentions subsisting between the various sects and parties in religion, the great and necessary articles, at least, of our faith, are established in some particulars, by the general consent of mankind, and, in all the rest, by that of the whole Christian world.

I would therefore most earnestly wish, that your minds, *rooted and established in the faith*, were firmly united in this delightful bond of religion, which, like a golden chain, will be no burden, but an ornament; not a yoke of slavery, but a badge of true and generous liberty. I would by no means have you to be Christians upon the authority of mere tradition, or education, and the example and precepts of parents and masters, but purely from a full conviction of your own understandings, and a fervent disposition of the will and affections proceeding therefrom. For piety "is the sole and only good among mankind*," and you can expect none of the fruits of religion, unless the root of it be well laid, and firmly established by faith: "for all the virtues are the daughters of faith†," says Clemens Alexandrinus.

Lucretius, with very ill-advise dpraises, extols his favourite Grecian philosopher as one fallen down from heaven to be the deliverer of mankind, and dispel their distressing terrors and fears, because he fancied he had found out an effectual method to banish all religion entirely out of the minds of men. And to say the truth, in no age has there been wanting brutish souls, too much enslaved to their corporeal senses, who would wish these opinions to be true; yet, after all, there are very few of them who are able to persuade themselves of the truth of those vicious principles which, with great impudence and importunity, they commonly inculcate upon others: they belch out with full mouth their foolish dreams, often in direct opposition to conscience and knowledge; and what they unhappily would wish to be true, they can scarcely, if at all, believe themselves. You are acquainted with Horace's recantation, wherein he tells us, "That he had been long bigoted to the mad tenets of the Epicurean philosophy, but found himself at last obliged to alter his sentiments, and deny all he had asserted before‡."

Some souls lose the whole exercise of their reason, because they inform bodies which labour under the defect of temperament or of proper organs; yet, you continue to give the old definition of man, and call him *a rational creature;* and should any one think proper to call him *a religious creature*, he would, to be sure, have as much reason on his side, and needed not fear his opinion would be rejected, because of a few madmen who laugh at religion. Nor is it improbable, as some of the ancients have asserted, that those few among the Greeks who were called Atheists, had not that epithet because they absolutely denied the being of God, but only because they rejected, and justly laughed at the fictitious and ridiculous deities of the nations.

Of all the institutions and customs received among men, we meet

* Ἓν γὰρ καὶ μόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθόν ἡ εὐσέβεια. Trismegist.

† Πᾶσαι γὰρ ἀρεταί πίστεως θυγάτερες.

‡ Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, &c. Od. xxxiv. lib. 1.

with nothing more solemn and general than that of religion and sacred rites performed to the honour of some deity; which is a very strong argument, that that persuasion, in preference to any other, is written, nay, rather engraven, in strong and indelible characters upon the mind of man. This is, as it were, the name of the great Creator stamped upon the noblest of all His visible works, that thus man may acknowledge himself to be His, and, concluding from the inscription he finds impressed upon his mind, that what belongs to God ought, in strict justice, to be restored to Him*, be wholly reunited to his first principle, that immense Ocean of goodness whence he took his rise. The distemper that has invaded mankind, is, indeed, grievous and epidemical: it consists in a mean and degenerate love to the body and corporeal things, and, in consequence of this, a stupid and brutish forgetfulness of God, though He can never be entirely blotted out of the mind. This forgetfulness, a few, and but very few, alarmed and awakened by the Divine rod, early shake off. And even in the most stupid, and such as are buried in the deepest sleep, the original impression sometimes discovers itself when they are under the pressure of some grievous calamity, or on the approach of danger, and especially upon a near prospect of death. Then, the thoughts of God, that had lain hid and been long suppressed, forced out by the weight of pain and the impressions of fear, come to be remembered; and the whole soul being, as it were, roused out of its long and deep sleep, men begin to look about them, inquire what the matter is, and seriously reflect whence they came, and whither they are going. Then, the truth comes naturally from their hearts. The stormy sea alarmed even profane sailors so much, that they awaked the sleeping prophet: *Awake*, say they, *thou sleeper, and call upon thy God.* Jonah i. 6.

But however weak or imperfect this original or innate knowledge of God may be, it discovers itself every where so far, at least, that you can meet with no man, or society of men, that, by some form of worship or ceremonies, do not acknowledge a Deity, and, according to their capacity, and the custom of their country, pay him homage. It is true, some late travellers have reported, that, in that part of the new world called Brazil, there are some tribes of the natives, among whom you can discover no symptoms that they have the least sense of a Deity: but, besides that the truth of this report is very far from being well ascertained, and that the observation might have been too precipitately made by new comers who had not made sufficient inquiry,—even supposing it to be true, it is not of such consequence when opposed to all the rest of the world, and the universal agreement of all nations and ages upon this subject, that the least regard should be paid to it. Nor must we imagine that it at all lessens the weight of this great argument, which has been generally and most justly urged, both by ancients and moderns, to establish the first and common foundation of religion.

Now, whoever accurately considers this universal sense of religion of which we have been speaking, will find that it comprehends in it these particulars: 1. That there is a God. 2. That He is to be

* Τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.

worshipped. 3. Which is a consequence of the former, that He regards the affairs of men. 4. That He has given them a law, enforced by rewards and punishments, and that the distribution of these, is, in a very great measure, reserved to a life different from that we live in this earth, is the firm belief, if not of all, at least, of the generality of mankind. And though our present purpose does not require that we should confirm the truth of all these points with those strong arguments that might be urged in their favour; but rather, that we should take them for granted, as being sufficiently established by the common consent of mankind; we shall, however, subjoin a few thoughts on each of them separately, with as great brevity and perspicuity as we can.

1. THAT THERE IS A GOD. And here I cannot help fearing, that when we endeavour to confirm this leading truth, with regard to the First and Uncreated Being, by a long and laboured series of arguments, we may seem, instead of a service, to do a kind of injury to God and man both. For why should we use the pitiful light of a candle to discover the sun, and eagerly go about to prove the being of Him who gave being to every thing else? Who alone exists necessarily, nay, we may boldly say, who alone exists; seeing all other things were by Him extracted out of nothing, and, when compared with Him, they are nothing, and even less than nothing, and vanity. And would not any man think himself insulted, should it be suspected, that he doubted of the being of Him, without whom he could neither doubt, nor think, nor be at all? This persuasion, without doubt, is innate, and strongly impressed upon the mind of man, if any thing at all can be said to be so*. Nor does Jamblicus scruple to say, "That to know God is our very being†;" and in another place, "That it is the very being of the soul to know God, on whom it depends‡." Nor would he think amiss, who, in this, should espouse the opinion of Plato: for, to know this, is nothing more than to call to remembrance what was formerly impressed upon the mind; and when one forgets it, (which alas! is too much the case of us all,) he has as many remembrancers, so to speak, within him, as he has members, and as many without him, as the individuals of the vast variety of creatures to be seen around him. Let, therefore, the indolent soul that has almost forgot God, be roused up, and every now and then say to itself, "Behold this beautiful starry heaven," &c.

But because we have too many of that sort of fools that say in their heart, "There is no God;" (and if we are *not to answer a fool, so as to be like unto him*, yet we are, by all means, to *answer him according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*;) again, because a criminal forgetfulness of this leading truth, is the sole source of all the wickedness in the world; and finally, because it may not be quite unprofitable, nor unpleasant, even to the best of men, sometimes to recollect their thoughts on this subject, but, on the contrary, a very pleasant exercise to every well-disposed mind, to reflect upon what a solid and unshaken foundation the whole fabric of religion is built, and to think

* Primum visibile lux, et primum intelligibile Deus.

† Esse nostrum est Deum cognoscere.

‡ Esse animæ, est quoddam intelligere, scilicet Deum, unde dependet.

and speak of the Eternal Fountain of goodness and of all other beings, and consequently of His necessary existence; we reckon it will not be amiss to give a few thoughts upon it. Therefore, not to insist upon several arguments, which are urged with great advantage on this subject, we shall produce only one or two, and shall reason thus.

It is by all means necessary, that there should be some eternal Being, otherwise, nothing could ever have been; since it must be a most shocking contradiction to say, that any thing could have produced itself out of nothing. But if we say, that any thing existed from eternity, it is most agreeable to reason, that that should be an eternal Mind, or Thinking Being, that so the noblest property may be ascribed to the most exalted being. Nay, that eternal Being must, of absolute necessity, excel in wisdom and power, and, indeed, in every other perfection, since it must itself be uncreated, and the cause and origin of all the creatures; otherwise, some difficulty will remain concerning their production. And thus, all the parts of the universe, taken singly, suggest arguments in favour of their Creator.

The beautiful order of the universe, and the mutual relation that subsists between all its parts, present us with another strong and convincing argument. This order is itself an effect, and, indeed, a wonderful one; and it is also evidently distinct from the things themselves, taken singly; therefore it must proceed from some cause, and a cause endowed with superior wisdom: for it would be the greatest folly, as well as impudence, to say it could be owing to mere chance. Now, it could not proceed from man, nor could it be owing to any concert or mutual agreement between the things themselves, separately considered; seeing the greatest part of them are evidently incapable of consultation and concert: it must, therefore, proceed from some one superior Being, and that Being is GOD, "who commanded the stars to move by stated laws, the fruits of the earth to be produced at different seasons, the changeable moon to shine with borrowed light, and the sun with his own*."

HE is the monarch of the universe, and the most absolute monarch in nature. For who else assigned to every rank of creatures its particular form and uses, so that the stars, subjected to no human authority or laws, should be placed on high, and serve to bring about to the earth and the inhabitants thereof, the regular returns of day and night, and distinguish the seasons of the year? Let us take, in particular, any one species of sublunary things, for instance, man, the noblest of all, and see how he came by the form wherewith he is invested, that frame or constitution of body, that vigour of mind, and that precise rank in the nature of things, which he now obtains, and no other. He must, certainly, either have made choice of these things for himself, or must have had them assigned him by another; whom we must consider as the principal actor, and sole architect of the whole fabric. That he made choice of them for himself, nobody

* ——————— Qui lege moveri
Sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,
Qui variam Phœben alieno jusserit igne
Compleri, solemque suo.

will imagine; for, either he made this choice before he had any existence of his own, or after he began to be: but it is not easy to say which of these suppositions is most absurd. It remains, therefore, that he must be indebted for all he enjoys, to the mere good pleasure of his great and all-wise Creator, who framed his earthly body in such a wonderful and surprising manner, animated him with his own breath, and thus introduced him into this great palace of His, which we now behold, where His *manifold wisdom*, most properly so called, displays itself so gloriously in the whole machine, and in every one of its wonderfully variegated parts.

The first argument, taken from the very being of things, may be further illustrated by the same instance of man. For unless the first man was created, we must suppose an infinite series of generations from eternity, and so, the human race must be supposed independent, and to owe its being to itself. But, by this hypothesis, mankind came into the world by generation, therefore, every individual of the race owes its being to another; consequently, the whole race is from itself, and at the same time from another, which is absurd. Therefore, the hypothesis implies a plain and evident contradiction. "O! immense wisdom that produced the world! Let us for ever admire the riches and skill of thy right hand*;" often viewing with attention Thy wonders, and, while we view them, frequently crying out with the divine Psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches!* Psal. civ. 24. *From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God, and besides Thee, there is no other.* Psal. xc. 2. And with Hermes, "The father of all, being Himself understanding, life, and brightness, created man like Himself, and cherished him as His own son. Thou Creator of universal nature, who hast extended the earth, who poisest the heavens, and commandest the waters to flow from all parts of the sea, we praise Thee, who art the one exalted God, for by Thy will all things are perfected†." The same author asserts that "God was prior to human nature."

In vain would any one endeavour to evade the force of our argument, by substituting Nature in the place of God, as the principal and cause of this beautiful order. For either, by Nature, he understands the particular frame and composition of every single thing; which would be saying nothing at all to the purpose in hand, because it is evident, that this manifold nature, which in most instances is quite void of reason, could never be the cause of that beautiful order and harmony which is every where conspicuous throughout the whole system: or, he means a universal and intelligent Nature disposing and ordering every thing to advantage. But this is only another name for God; of whom it may be said, in a sacred sense, that He, as an infinite Nature and Mind, pervades and fills all His works. Not as an

* O! immensa, opifex rerum sapientia! dextræ
Divitias artemque tuæ miremur in ævum.

† Ὁ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ νοῦς ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς αἰτεκνώσε ἄνθρωπον οὗ ηρασθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου, Πάσης φύσεως κτίστης ὁ πήξας τὴν γῆν καὶ σῦρανον κρεμάσας καὶ ὑπιτάξας το γλυκὺ ὕδωρ ἐξ αυτοῦ τοῦ ἀκιανοῦ ὑπαρχειν, ὑμνῶμεν σε τὸ πᾶν, καὶ τὸ ἓν, σοῦ γὰς βουλυμενου παντα τιλιῦται.

informing form, according to the expression of the schools, and as the part of a compounded whole; which is the idlest fiction that can be imagined, for, at this rate, He must not only be a part of the vilest insects, but also, of stocks and stones, and clods of earth; but a pure, unmixed Nature, which orders and governs all things with the greatest freedom and wisdom, and supports them with unwearied and almighty power. In this acceptation, when you name Nature, you mean God. Seneca's words are very apposite to this purpose. "Whithersoever you turn yourself, you see God meeting you; nothing excludes His presence; He fills all his works. Therefore, it is in vain for thee, most ungrateful of all men, to say thou art not indebted to God, but to Nature, because they are, in fact, the same. If thou hadst received any thing from Seneca, and should say, thou owedst it to Annæus or Lucius, thou wouldst not thereby change thy creditor, but only his name, because, whether thou mentionest his name or his surname, his person is still the same*."

An evident and most natural consequence of this universal and necessary idea of a God, is, His unity. All who mention the term God, intend to convey by it, the idea of the first, most exalted, necessarily existent, and infinitely perfect Being; and it is plain, there can be but one Being endued with all these perfections. Nay, even the polytheism that prevailed among the heathen nations, was not carried so far, but that they acknowledged one God, by way of eminence, as supreme and absolutely above all the rest, whom they styled the greatest and best of Beings, and the Father of gods and men. From Him, all the rest had their being and all that they were, and from Him, also, they had the title of gods, but still in a limited and subordinate sense. In confirmation of this, we meet with very many of the clearest testimonies with regard to the unity of God, in the works of all the heathen authors. That of Sophocles is very remarkable: "There is indeed," says he, "one God, and but one, who has made the heavens, and the wide extended earth, the blue surges of the sea, and the strength of the winds†."

As to the mystery of the sacred Trinity, which has a near and necessary connexion with the present subject, I always thought it was to be received and adored with the most humble faith, but by no means to be curiously searched into, or perplexed with the absurd questions of the schoolmen. We fell by an arrogant ambition after knowledge; by mere faith we rise again, and are reinstated. And this mystery, indeed, rather than any other, seems to be a tree of knowledge, prohibited to us while we sojourn in these mortal bodies. This most profound mystery, though obscurely represented by the shadows of the Old Testament, rather than clearly revealed, was not unknown to

* Quocunque te flexeris, ibi Deum vides occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat; opes suum ipse implet: ergo nihil agis, ingratissime mortalium, qui te negas Deo debere, sed naturæ, quia eidem est utrumque officium. Si quid a Seneca accepisses, et Annæo te diceres debere vel Lucio, non creditorem mutares, sed nomen, quoniam sive nomen ejus dicas, sive prænomen, sive cognomen, idem tamen ipse est. SENECA, 4. de Benef.

† Εἷς θεὸς ἀληθείαισιν, εἷς ἐστὶν Θεός,
Ὃς οὐρανόν τ' ἔτευξε καὶ γαῖαν μακράν
Πόντου τε χαραπὸν οἴδμα καὶ ἀνέμων βίας.

the most ancient and celebrated doctors among the Jews, nor altogether unattested, however obstinately later authors may maintain the contrary. Nay, learned men have observed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are expressly acknowledged in the books of the Cabalists, and they produce surprising things to this purpose out of the book of Zohar, which is ascribed to R. Simeon, Ben Joch, and some other Cabalistical writers. Nay the book just now mentioned, after saying a great deal concerning the Three in One Essence, adds, "That this secret will not be revealed to all till the coming of the Messias*." I insist not upon what is said of the name consisting of twelve letters, and another larger one of forty-two, as containing a fuller explication of that most sacred name, which they call Hammephorash†.

Nor is it improbable, that some dawn, at least, of this mystery had reached even the heathen philosophers. There are some who think they can prove, by arguments of no inconsiderable weight, that Anaxagoras, by his νοῦς, or mind, meant nothing but the Son, or Wisdom that made the world. But the testimonies are clearer, which you find frequently among the Platonic philosophers, concerning the *Three subsisting from one*‡: moreover, they all call the *self-existing Being*, the *creating word*, or, *the mind* and *the soul of the world*§. But the words of the Egyptian Hermes are very surprising: "The mind, which is God, together with his word, produced another creating-mind; nor do they differ from one another, for their union is life‖."

But what we now insist upon, is, the plain and evident necessity of one Supreme, and therefore, of one Only Principle of all things, and the harmonious agreement of mankind in the belief of the absolute necessity of this same principle.

This is the God whom we admire, whom we worship, whom we entirely love, or, at least, whom we desire to love above all things; whom we can neither express in words, nor conceive in our thoughts; and the less we are capable of these things, so much the more necessary it is to adore Him with the profoundest humility, and to love Him with the greatest intentness and fervour.

LECTURE VIII.

Of the Worship *of* God, Providence, *and the* Law *given to* Man.

Though I thought it by no means proper to proceed without taking notice of the arguments that serve to confirm the first and leading truth of religion, and the general consent of mankind with regard to it; yet, the end I chiefly proposed to myself, was to examine this consent, and point out its force, and the use to which it ought to be applied; to call off your minds from the numberless disputes about religion, to the

* Hoc arcanum non revelabitur unicuique, quousque venerit Messias.

† Maim. Mor. Nev. part. i. c. 16.

‡ Περὶ τριῶν ἐξ ἑνὸς ὑποστάντων.

§ Τὸ αὐτό, ὁν τον δημιουργον λογον, seu νοῦν, καὶ τὴν του κόσμου ψυχην.

‖ Ὁ νοῦς θεὸς ἀπεκυησι λογῳ ἕτερον νοῦν δημιουργὸν, ἀλλ' οὐ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλληλῶν, ἕνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή.

contemplation of this universal agreement, as into a more quiet and peaceable country; and to shew you, what I wish I could effectually convince you of, that there is more weight and force in this universal harmony and consent of mankind in a few of the great and universal principles, to confirm our minds in the sum and substance of religion, than the innumerable disputes that still subsist with regard to the other points, ought to have to discourage us in the exercise of true piety, or in the least to weaken our faith.

In consequence of this, it will be proper to lay before you the other propositions contained in this general consent of mankind, with regard to religion. Now, the first of these being, That there is one, and but one Eternal Principle of all things; from this it will most naturally follow, That this Principle or Deity is to be honoured with some worship; and from these two taken together, it must be, with the same necessity, concluded, That there is a providence, or, that God doth not despise or neglect the world which He has created, and mankind by whom He ought to be, and actually is worshipped, but governs them with the most watchful and perfect wisdom.

All mankind acknowledge, that some kind of worship is due to God, and that to perform it is by all means worthy of man; and upon the minds of all is strongly impressed that sentiment which Lactantius expressed with great perspicuity and brevity in these words, "To know God is wisdom, and to worship Him, justice *."

In this worship some things are natural, and therefore of more general use among all nations, such as vows and prayers, hymns and praises; as also some bodily gestures, especially such as seem most proper to express reverence and respect. All the rest, for the most part, actually consist of ceremonies, either of Divine institution or human invention. Of this sort are sacrifices, the use whereof in old times, very much prevailed in all nations, and still continues in the greater part of the world.

A Majesty so exalted, no doubt, deserves the highest honour, and the sublimest praises on His own account; but still if men were not persuaded that the testimonies of homage and respect they offer to God, were known to Him, and accepted of Him, even on this account all human piety would cool and presently disappear; and indeed, prayers and vows, whereby we implore the Divine assistance, and solicit blessings from above, offered to a God, who neither hears nor in the least regards them, would be an instance of the greatest folly; nor is it to be imagined, that all nations would ever have agreed in the extravagant custom of addressing themselves to gods that did not hear.

Supposing, therefore, any religion, or Divine worship, it immediately follows therefrom, that there is also a providence. This was acknowledged of old, and is still acknowledged by the generality of all nations throughout the world, and the most famous philosophers. There were, indeed particular men, and some whole sects, that denied it. Others, who acknowledged a kind of Providence, confined it to the heavens, among whom was Aristotle, as appears from his book *De Mundo;*

* Deum nosse, sapientia; colere, justitia.

which notion is justly slighted by Nazianzen, who calls it "a mere limited Providence *." Others allowed it some place in things of this world, but only extended it to generals, in opposition to individuals. But others, with the greatest justice, acknowledged that all things, even the most minute and inconsiderable, were the objects of it. "He fills his own work, nor is he only over it, but also in it †." Moreover, if we ascribe to God the origin of this fabric and all things in it, it will be most absurd and inconsistent to deny Him the preservation and government of it: for, if He does not preserve and govern His creatures, it must be either because He cannot, or because He will not; but His infinite power and wisdom make it impossible to doubt of the former, and His infinite goodness, of the latter. The words of Epictetus are admirable: "There were five great men," said he, "of which number were Ulysses and Socrates, who said that they could not so much as move without the knowledge of God ‡." And in another place, "If I was a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; if a swan, that of a swan; now that I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God §."

It would be needless to shew, that so great a fabric could not stand without some Being properly qualified to watch over it; that the unerring course of the stars is not the effect of blind fortune; that what chance sets on foot, is often put out of order, and soon falls to pieces; that, therefore, this unerring and regular velocity is owing to the influence of a fixed, eternal law. It is, to be sure, a very great miracle, merely to know so great a multitude, and such a vast variety of things, not only particular towns, but also provinces and kingdoms, even the whole earth, all the myriads of creatures that crawl upon the earth, and all their thoughts; in a word, at the same instant to hear and see all that happens‖ on both hemispheres of this globe: how much more wonderful must it be, to rule and govern all these at once, and, as it were with one glance of the eye! When we consider this, may we not cry out with the poet. "O thou great Creator, of heaven and earth, who governest the world with constant and unerring sway, who biddest time to flow throughout ages, and continuing unmoved thyself, givest motion to every thing else, &c. ¶"

It is also a great comfort, to have the faith of this Providence constantly impressed upon the mind, so as to have recourse to it in the midst of all confusions, whether public or private, and all calamities from without or from within; to be able to say—The great King, who is also my Father, is the supreme ruler of all these things, and with Him all my interests are secure; to stand firm, with Moses, when no

* Μικρόλογον πρόνοιαν.

† Opus suum ipse implet, nec solum præest, sed inest.

‡ Πεμπτοι δι ὧν ἦν καὶ ὀδυσσεύς, καὶ Σωκράτες, οἱ λεγοντες, ὅτι οὐδε σηλήθω κινουμενος. Arrian. lib. i. cap. 12. Περι Θεῶν, &c.

§ Εἰ μὲν ἀηδὼν ημην, ἐποίουν τὰ τῆς ἀηδόνος, εἰ κύκνος τᾶ τοῦ κύκνου, νῦν δι λογικος εἶμι ὑμνεῖν με δει τον Θεόν. Ibid. cap. 16.

‖ Παντ' ἰφορᾶν, καὶ παντ' ἰπακοὐειν.

¶ O! qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
Terrarum cœlique sator, qui tempus ab ævo,
Ire jubes; stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri, &c.
Boeth, de Con. Philosoph. lib. iii. metr. 9.

relief appears, and to look for the salvation of God from on high, and, finally, in every distress, when all hope of human assistance is swallowed up in despair, to have the remarkable saying of the father of the faithful stamped upon the mind, and to silence all fears with these comfortable words, *God will provide.* In a word, there is nothing that can so effectually conform the heart of man, and his inmost thoughts, and consequently the whole tenour of his life, to the most perfect rule of religion and piety, as a firm belief and frequent meditation on this Divine Providence, which superintends and governs the world. He who is firmly persuaded, that an exalted God of infinite wisdom and purity is constantly present with him, and sees all that he thinks or acts, will, to be sure, have no occasion to overawe his mind with the imaginary presence of a Lælius or a Cato. Josephus assigns this as the source or root of Abel's purity: "In all his actions," says he, "he considered that God was present with him, and therefore made virtue his constant study*.

Moreover, the heathen nations acknowledge this superintendence of Divine Providence over human affairs in this very respect, and that it is exercised in observing the morals of mankind, and in distributing rewards and punishments. But this supposes some law or rule, either revealed from Heaven or stamped upon the hearts of men, to be the measure and test of moral good and evil, that is, virtue and vice. Man, therefore, is not Ζῶον ἄνομον, a lawless creature, but capable of a law, and actually born under one, which he himself is also ready to own. "We are born in a kingdom," says the Rabbinical philosopher, "and to obey God is liberty†." But this doctrine, however perspicuous and clear in itself, seems to be a little obscured by one cloud, that is, the extraordinary success which bad men often meet with, and the misfortunes and calamities to which virtue is frequently exposed. The saying of Brutus, "O! wretched virtue, thou art regarded as nothing, &c.‡" is well known; as are also those elegant verses of the poet, containing a lively picture of the perplexity of a mind wavering and at a loss upon this subject: "My mind," says he, "has often been perplexed with difficulties and doubts, whether the gods regard the affairs of this earth, or whether there was no Providence at all. . . . . For, when I considered the order and disposition of the world, and the boundaries set to the sea—I thence concluded, that all things were secured by the providence of God. . . . . But when I saw the affairs of men involved in so much darkness and confusion, *&c.* §"

But not to insist upon a great many other considerations, which

* Πάσιν τοῖς ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ πραττομένοις παρεῖναιτον Θεον νομίζων, ἀριστῆς προνοῦτο. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 3.

† In regno nati sumus, Deo parere, libertas.

‡ Ο τλήμων ἀρετὴ ὡς σύδὲν, &c.

§ Sepe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem
Curarent superi terras, *&c.*
Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi
Præscriptosque maris fines—
——— hinc omnia rebar
Consilia firmata Dei, *&c.*
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi
Aspicerem, *&c.*——CLAUDIAN in Rufinum, lib. i.

even the philosophy of the heathens suggested, in vindication of the doctrine of Providence; there is one consideration of great weight to be set in opposition to the whole of this prejudice, *viz.*, that it is an evidence of a rash and forward mind, to pass sentence upon things that are not yet perfect and brought to a final conclusion; which even the Roman stoic, and the philosopher of Cheronea insist upon, at large, on this subject. If we will judge from events, let us put off the cause and delay sentence, till the whole series of these events come before us; and let us not pass sentence upon a successful tyrant, while he is triumphant before our eyes, and while we are quite ignorant of the fate that may be awaiting himself or his son, or, at least, his more remote posterity. The ways of Divine justice are wonderful. "Punishment stalks silently, and with a slow pace; it will, however, at last overtake the wicked *." But, after all, if we expect another scene of things to be exhibited, not here, but in the world to come, the whole dispute concerning the events of this short and precarious life, immediately disappears and comes to nothing. And to conclude, the consent of wise men, states, and nations on this subject, though it is not quite unanimous and universal, is very great, and ought to have the greatest weight.

But all these maxims we have mentioned, are more clearly taught, and more firmly established, in the Christian religion, which is of undoubted truth: it has also some doctrines peculiar to itself, [Κυρίας δόξας,] annexed to the former, and most closely connected with them, in which the whole Christian world, though by far too much divided with regard to other disputed articles, are unanimously agreed and firmly united together. But of this hereafter.

LECTURE IX.

Of the Pleasure and Utility of RELIGION.

THOUGH the author of the following passage was a great proficient in the mad philosophy of Epicurus, yet he had truth strongly on his side, when he said, "That nothing was more pleasant than to be stationed on the lofty temples, well defended and secured by the pure and peaceable doctrines of the wise philosophers†."

Now, can any doctrine be imagined more wise, more pure and peaceable, and more sacred, than that which flowed from the most perfect fountain of wisdom and purity, which was sent down from heaven to earth, that it might guide all its followers to that happy place whence it took its rise? It is, to be sure, the wisdom of mankind to know God, and their indispensable duty, to worship Him. Without this, men of the brightest parts and greatest learning, seem to be born with excellent talents only to make themselves miserable; and, according to the expression of the wisest of kings, *He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow*, Eccl. i. 18. We must, therefore, first of all, con-

* Σιγᾷ καὶ βραδεῖ τοὶ στυγουσα μάρψει τοὺς κακοὺς ὅταν τύχῃ.

† ——— Bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrinâ sapientum templa serena.—LUCRETIUS.

sider this as a sure and settled point, that religion is the sole foundation of human peace and felicity. This, even the profane scoffers at Religion are, in some sort, obliged to own, though much against their will, even, while they are pointing their wit against it: for nothing is more commonly to be heard from them, than that the whole doctrine of religion was invented by some wise men, to encourage the practice of justice and virtue through the world. Surely then, religion, whatever else may be said of it, must be a matter of the highest value, since it is found necessary to secure advantages of so very great importance. But, in the mean time, how unhappy is the case of integrity and virtue, if what they want to support them is merely fictitious, and they cannot keep their ground but by means of a monstrous forgery! But far be it from us to entertain such an absurdity! For the first rule of righteousness cannot be otherwise than right, nor is there any thing more nearly allied or more friendly to virtue, than truth.

But religion is not only highly conducive to all the great advantages of human life, but is also, at the same time, most pleasant and delightful. Nay, if it is so useful, and absolutely necessary to the interests of virtue, it must, for this very reason, be also pleasant; unless one will call in question a maxim universally approved by all wise men, that "life cannot be agreeable without virtue *:" a maxim of such irrefragable and undoubted truth, that it was adopted even by Epicurus himself.

How great, therefore, must have been the madness of that noted Grecian philosopher, who, while he openly maintained the dignity and pleasantness of virtue, at the same time employed the whole force of his understanding to ruin and sap its foundations! For, that this was his fixed purpose, Lucretius not only owns, but also boasts of it, and loads him with ill-advised praises for endeavouring, through the whole course of his philosophy, to free the minds of men from all the bonds and ties of religion. As if there was no possible way to make them happy and free, without involving them in the guilt of sacrilege and atheism! As if to eradicate all sense of a Deity out of the mind, were the only way to free it from the heaviest chains and fetters! Though, in reality, this would be effectually robbing man of all his valuable jewels, of his golden crown and chain, all the riches, ornaments, and pleasures of his life: which is inculcated at large, and with great eloquence, by a greater and more divine master of wisdom, the royal author of the Proverbs, who speaking of the precepts of religion, says, *They shall be an ornament of grace unto thine head, and chains about thy neck:* and of religion, under the name of wisdom, *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasure. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding.* Prov. i. 9; ii. 4; xiii. 14; iv. 7.

And it is, indeed, very plain, that if it were possible entirely to dissolve all the bonds and ties of religion, yet, that it should be so,

* Οὐκ ἔστι ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τῆς ἀρετῆς.

would certainly be the interest of none but the worst and most abandoned part of mankind. All the good and wise, if the matter was freely left to their choice, would rather have the world governed by the Supreme and Most Perfect Being, mankind subjected to His just and righteous laws, and all the affairs of men superintended by His watchful providence, than that it should be otherwise. Nor do they believe the doctrines of religion with aversion or any sort of reluctancy, but embrace them with pleasure, and are excessively glad to find them true. So that, if it was possible, to abolish them entirely, and any person, out of mere good-will to them, should attempt to do it, they would look upon the favour as highly prejudicial to their interest, and think his good-will more hurtful than the keenest hatred. Nor would any one, in his wits, choose to live in the world, at large, and without any sort of government, more than he would think it eligible to be put on board a ship without a helm or pilot, and, in this condition, to be tossed amidst rocks and quicksands. On the other hand, can any thing give greater consolation, or more substantial joy*, than to be firmly persuaded, not only that there is an infinitely good and wise Being, but also that this Being preserves and continually governs the universe which Himself has framed, and holds the reins of all things in His powerful hand; that He is our father, that we and all our interests are His constant concern; and that, after we have sojourned a short while here below, we shall be again taken into His immediate presence? Or can this wretched life be attended with any sort of satisfaction, if it is divested of this Divine faith, and bereaved of such a blessed hope?

Moreover, every one who thinks a generous fortitude and purity of mind preferable to the charms and muddy pleasures of the flesh, finds all the precepts of religion not only not grievous, but exceeding pleasant and extremely delightful. So that, upon the whole, the saying of Hermes is very consistent with the nature of things: "There is one, and but one good thing among men, and that is religion †." Even the vulgar could not bear the degenerate expression of the player who called out upon the stage, "Money is the chief good among mankind ‡." But should any one say, Religion is the principal good of mankind, no objection could be made against it; for, without doubt, it is the only object the beauties whereof engage the love both of God and man.

But the principal things in religion, as I have frequently observed, are, just conceptions of God. Now concerning this Infinite Being, some things are known by the light of nature and reason, others only by the revelation which He hath been pleased to make of Himself from heaven. That there is a God, is the distinct voice of every man, and of every thing without him. How much more then shall we be confirmed in the belief of this truth, if we attentively view the whole creation, and the wonderful order and harmony that subsist between all the parts of the whole system! It is quite unnecessary to shew, that so great a fabric could never have been brought into being without

* Θεοῦ τι τούτων χάρμα μεῖζον ἂν λαβοίς.
† Ἓν καὶ μονον, ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθον ἡ ευσεβια.
‡ Pecunia magnum generis humani bonum.

an all-wise and powerful Creator; nor could it now subsist without the same almighty Being to support and preserve it. "Let men, therefore, make this their constant study," says Lactantius, "even to know their common Parent and Lord, whose power can never be perfectly known, whose greatness cannot be fathomed, nor his eternity comprehended *." When the mind of man, with its faculties, comes to be once intensely fixed upon Him, all other objects disappearing, and being, as it were removed quite out of sight, it is entirely at a stand and overpowered, nor can it possibly proceed further. But concerning the doctrine of this vast volume of the works of God, and that still brighter light which shines forth in the Scriptures, we shall speak more fully hereafter.

LECTURE X.

Of the Decrees of God.

As the glory and brightness of the Divine Majesty is so great, that the strongest human eye cannot bear the direct rays of it, He has exhibited Himself to be viewed in the glass of those works which He created first, and, by His unwearied hand, continually supports and governs. Nor are we allowed to view His eternal counsels and purposes through any other medium than this. So that, in our Catechisms, especially the shorter one, designed for the instruction of the ignorant, it might, perhaps, have been full as proper to have passed over the awful speculation concerning the Divine decrees, and to have proceeded directly to the consideration of the works of God; but the thoughts you find in it, on this subject, are few, sober, clear, and certain; and in explaining them, I think it most reasonable and most safe, to confine ourselves within these limits, in any audience whatever, but especially in this congregation, consisting of youths, not to say, in a great measure, of boys. Seeing, therefore, the decrees of God are mentioned in our Catechism, and it would not be proper to pass over in silence a matter of so great moment, I shall accordingly lay before you some few thoughts upon this arduous subject.

And here, if any where, we ought, according to the common saying, to reason but in few words. I should, indeed, think it very improper to do otherwise; for such theories ought to be cautiously touched, rather than be spun out to a great length. One thing we may confidently assert, that all those things which the great Creator produces in different periods of time, were perfectly known to Him, and, as it were, present with Him, from eternity; and that every thing that happens, throughout the several ages of the world, proceeds in the same order and same precise manner, as the Eternal Mind at first intended it should; that none of His counsels can be disappointed or rendered ineffectual, or in the least changed or altered by any event whatsover. *Known to God are all His works*, says the Apostle in the council of Jerusalem. Acts xv. 18. And the son of Sirach, *God sees*

* Ut Parentum suum, Dominumque cognoscanæ cujus nec virtus æstimari potest, nec magnitudo perspici, nec eternitas comprehendi.

from everlasting to everlasting, and nothing is wonderful in His sight. Nothing is new or unexpected to Him; nothing can come to pass that He has not foreseen. And His first thoughts are so wise, that they admit no second ones that can be supposed wiser. And this stability and immutability of the Divine decrees, is asserted even by the Roman Philosopher: "It is necessary," says he, "that the same things be always pleasing to Him, who can never be pleased but with what is best*."

Every artist, to be sure, as you also well know, works according to some pattern, which is the immediate object of his mind; and this pattern, in the all-wise Creator, must necessarily be entirely perfect, and every way complete. And if this is what Plato intended by his ideas, (which, not a few, and these by no means unlearned, think very likely) his own scholar, the great Stagyrite, and your favourite philosopher, had, surely, no reason so often and so bitterly to inveigh against them. Be this as it may, all who acknowledge God to be the author of this wonderful fabric, and all these things in it, which succeed one another in their turns, cannot possibly doubt, that He has brought, and continues to bring them all about, according to that most perfect pattern subsisting in His eternal councils; and that these things that we call casual, are all unalterably fixed and determined to Him. For according to that of the philosopher, "Where there is most wisdom, there is least chance†," and therefore, surely, where there is infinite wisdom, there is nothing left to chance at all.

This maxim, concerning the eternal councils of the supreme Sovereign of the world, besides that it every where shines clearly in the books of the sacred Scriptures, is also, in itself, so evident and consistent with reason, that we meet with it in almost all the works of the philosophers, and often, also, in those of the poets. Nor does it appear, that they mean any thing else, at least, for the most part, by the term *fate;* though you may meet with some things in their works, which, I own, sound a little harsh, and can scarcely be sufficiently softened by any, even the most favourable interpretation.

But, whatever else may seem to be comprehended under the term *fate*, whether taken in the mathematical or physical sense, as some are pleased to distinguish, it must at last of necessity be resolved into the appointment and good pleasure of the supreme Governor of the world. If even the blundering astrologers and fortune-tellers acknowledge, that the wise man has dominion over the stars; how much more evident is it, that all these things, and all their power and influence, are subject and subservient to the decrees of the all-wise God! Whence the saying of the Hebrews, "There is no planet to Israel‡."

And according as all these things in the heavens above and the earth beneath, are daily regulated and directed by the Eternal King, in the same precise manner were they all from eternity ordered and disposed by Him, who *worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,* Eph. i. 11, who is more ancient than the sea and the mountains, or even the heavens themselves.

* Necesse est illi eadem semper placere, cui nisi optima placere non possunt.

† Ubi plus est sapientiæ, ibi minus est casus.

‡ Non esse planetam Israeli.

These things we are warranted and it is safe to believe. But what perverseness, or rather madness, is it, to endeavour to break into the sacred repositories of Heaven, and pretend to accommodate those secrets of the Divine kingdom to the measures and methods of our weak capacities! To say the truth, I acknowledge that I am astonished and greatly at a loss, when I hear learned men, and professors of Theology, talking presumptuously about the order of the Divine decrees, and when I read such things in their works. "Paul," says St. Chrysostom, "considering this awful subject as an immense sea, was astonished at it, and viewing the vast abyss, started back, and cried out with a loud voice, *Oh! the depth!* *" Nor is there much more sobriety or moderation in the many notions that are entertained, and the disputes that are commonly raised about reconciling these Divine decrees with the liberty and free-will of man.

It is indeed true, that neither religion nor right reason will suffer the actions and designs of men, and consequently, even the very motions of the will, to be exempted from the empire of the counsel and good pleasure of God. Even the books of the heathens are filled with most express testimonies of the most absolute sovereignty of God, even with regard to these. The sentiments of Homer are well known †; and with him agrees the tragic poet, Euripides; "O! Jupiter," says he, "why are we wretched mortals called wise? For we depend entirely upon thee, and we do whatever thou intendest we should ‡."

And it would be easy to bring together a vast collection of such sayings, but these are sufficient for our present purpose.

They always seemed to me to act a very ridiculous part, who contend, that the effect of the Divine decrees is absolutely irreconcilable with human liberty, because the natural and necessary liberty of a rational creature is, to act or choose from a rational motive, or spontaneously, and of purpose. But who sees not, that, on the supposition of the most absolute decree, this liberty is not taken away, but rather established and confirmed? For the decree is, that such an one shall make choice of, or do some particular thing, freely; and whoever pretends to deny, that whatever is done or chosen, whether good or indifferent, is so done or chosen, or, at least, may be so, espouses an absurdity. But, in a word, the great difficulty in all this dispute, is that with regard to the *origin of evil.* Some distinguish, and justly, the substance of the action, as you call it, or that which is physical in the action, from the morality of it. This is of some weight, but whether it takes away the whole difficulty, I will not pretend to say. Believe me, young gentlemen, it is an abyss, it is an abyss never to be perfectly sounded by any plummet of human understanding. Should any one say, "I am not to be blamed, but Jove and Fate §," he will not get off so, but may be nonplussed by turning his own wit against him. The servant of Zeno, the Stoic philosopher,

* Ὁ Παῦλος ὥσπερ πρὸς πέλαγος ἄπειρον ἰλιγγιάσας καὶ βαθυς ἴδων ἀχανές, ἀπεπήδησεν εὐθέως καὶ μεγαλα ἀνεβόησεν, εἶπων, ὦ βαθος, &c.

† Τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστιν, &c. CHRYS.

‡ Ὦ Ζεῦ τί δῆτα τοὺς ταλαιπόρους,
Φρονεῖν λέγουσι, σου γὰρ ἐξηρτήμεθα,
Δρῶμεν, τε τοιαῦτ, ἁν σὺ τογχανης θέλων. IKET. 1. 734.

§ Οὐκ ἐγώ ἄιτιος ἐιμί, αλλα ζεὺς καὶ μοῖρα.

being catched in an act of theft, either with a design to ridicule his master's doctrine, or to avail himself of it in order to evade punishment, said, "It was my fate to be a thief." "And to be punished for it," said Zeno *. Wherefore, if you will take my advice, withdraw your minds from a curious search into this mystery, and turn them directly to the study of piety, and a due reverence to the awful majesty of God. Think and speak of God and His secrets with fear and trembling, but dispute very little about them; and, if you would not undo yourselves, beware of disputing with Him. If you transgress in any thing, blame yourselves: if you do any good, or repent of evil, offer thanksgiving to God. This is what I earnestly recommend to you; in this I acquiesce myself; and to this, when much tossed and distressed with doubt and difficulties, I had recourse, as to a safe harbour. If any of you think proper, he may apply to men of greater learning; but let him take care he meet not with such as have more forwardness and presumption.

LECTURE XI.

Of the CREATION *of the* WORLD.

WHOEVER looks upon this great system of the universe, of which he himself is but a very small part, with a little more than ordinary attention, unless his mind is become quite brutish within him, it will, of necessity, put him upon considering whence this beautiful frame of things proceeded, and what was its first original; or, in the words of the poet, "From what principles all the elements were formed, and how the various parts of the world at first came together †."

Now, as we have already observed in our dissertation concerning God, that the mind rises directly from the consideration of this visible world, to that of its invisible Creator: so, from the contemplation of the First and Infinite Mind, it descends to this visible fabric; and again, the contemplation of this latter determines it to return, with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, to that Eternal Fountain of goodness and of every thing that exists. Nor is this a vicious and faulty circle, but the constant course of a pious soul, travelling, as it were, backwards and forwards from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth: a notion quite similar to that of the angels ascending and descending upon the ladder which Jacob saw in his vision. But this contemplation by all means requires a pure and divine temper of mind, according to the maxims of the philosopher: "He that would see God and goodness, must first be himself good, and like the Deity ‡." And those who have the eyes of their mind pure and bright, will sooner be able to read in those objects that are exposed to the outward eye, the great and evident characters of His eternal Power and Godhead.

We shall, therefore, now advance some thoughts upon the Creation, which was the first and most stupendous of all the Divine works; and

* In fatis mihi, inquit, fuit furari. Et cædi, inquit Zeno.

† ——————— Quibusque exordia primis
Omnia, et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis. VIR. Ecl. vi.

‡ Γενίσθω δὲ πρῶτον θεοειδὴς πᾶς καὶ καλὸς εἰ μέλλει θεασασθαι θεὸντε καὶ καλον. PLOT.

the rather, that some of the philosophers, who were, to be sure, positive in asserting the being of a God, did not acknowledge him to be the Author or Creator of the world. As for us, according to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. xi. v. 3, *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.* Of this we have a distinct history in the first book of Moses and of the sacred Scriptures, which we receive as divine. And this same doctrine, the prophets and apostles, and, together with them, all the sacred writers, frequently repeat in their sermons and writings, as the great foundation of faith, and of all true religion. For which reason, it ought to be diligently inculcated upon the minds of all, even those of the most ignorant, as far as they are able to conceive and believe it; though, to be sure, it contains in it so many mysteries, that they are sufficient not only to exercise the most acute and learned understandings, but even far to exceed their capacities, and quite overpower them: which the Jewish doctors seem to have been so sensible, or, if I may use the expression, so over sensible of, that they admitted not their disciples to look into the three first chapters of Genesis, till they arrived at the age required for entering on the priestly office.

Although the faith of this doctrine immediately depends upon the authority and testimony of the Supreme God of truth,—(for, as St. Ambrose expresses it, "To whom should I give greater credit concerning God, than to God himself*?")—it is however so agreeable to reason, that if any one choose to enter into the dispute, he will find the strongest arguments presenting themselves in confirmation of the faith of it, but those on the opposite side, if any such there be that deserve the name, quite frivolous, and of no manner of force. Tatian declared, that no argument more effectually determined him to believe the Scriptures, and embrace the Christian faith, than "the consistent, intelligible account they gave of the creation of the universe†."

Let any one that pleases, choose what other opinion he will adopt upon this subject, or, as it is a matter of doubt and obscurity, any of the other hypotheses he thinks most feasible. Is he for the atoms of Epicurus, dancing at random in an empty space, and, after innumerable trials, throwing themselves at last into the beautiful fabric which we behold, and that merely by a kind of lucky hit, or fortunate throw of the dice, without any Amphion with his harp, to charm them by his music, and lead them into the building? To say the truth, the Greek philosopher had dreamed these things very prettily, or, according to more probable accounts, borrowed them from two other blundering philosophers, Democritus and Leucippus, though he used all possible art to conceal it, that he might have to himself the whole glory of this noble invention. But whoever first invented or published this hypothesis, how, pray, will he persuade us that things are actually so? By what convincing arguments will he prove them? Or what credible witnesses will he produce to attest his facts? For it would neither be modest nor decent for him nor his followers, to expect implicit faith in a matter truly philosophical and physical, and at the same time of so great importance; especially as it is their common

* Cui enim magis de Deo, quam Deo credam? Ambros.

† Τὸ ἰνκατανλήπτον τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ποιήσεως. Tatian.

method, smartly to ridicule and superciliously to despise the rest of mankind, as being, according to their opinion, too credulous in matters of religion. But what we have now said is more than enough upon an hypothesis so silly, monstrous, and inconsistent.

After leaving the Epicureans, there is no other noted shift that I know of, remaining for one that rejects the doctrine of the Creation, but only that fiction of the Peripatetic school, concerning the eternity of the world. This Aristotle is said to have borrowed from a Pythagorean philosopher, named Ocellus Lucanus, who, in that instance, seems to have deserted not only the doctrine of his master, Pythagoras, but also that of all the more ancient philosophers. It is true, two or three others are named, Parmenio, Melissus, &c., who are suspected to have been of the same sentiments with Ocellus; but this is a matter of uncertainty, and therefore to be left undetermined. And, indeed, both Aristotle and Ocellus seem to have done this at random, or without proof, as they have advanced no arguments in favour of their new doctrine, that can be thought very favourable, much less cogent and convincing.

It is surely impossible to demonstrate the truth of their opinion *à priori;* nor did these authors attempt it. They only endeavoured to muster up some difficulties against the production of the world in time, the great weakness whereof, any one who is but tolerably acquainted with the Christian religion, will easily perceive. Aristotle's arguments rather make against some notions espoused by the old philosophers, or rather forged by himself, than against the doctrine of the Creation. Nay, he himself sometimes speaks with great diffidence of his own opinion on this subject, particularly in his topics, where, among other logical problems, he proposes this as one, *viz.*, "Whether the world existed from eternity or not*."

On the contrary, that the world has evident marks of novelty, is acknowledged by Lucretius in a remarkable passage of his poems, which is very well known. "Besides," says he, "if the earth and the heavens were not originally created, but existed from eternity, why did not earlier poets describe the remarkable actions of their times long before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy? But, in my opinion, the universe is not of old standing, the world is but of late establishment, and it is not long since it had its beginning." And more to that purpose†. But, besides this, if we duly consider the matter, and acknowledge the course of the stars not only to be owing to a first mover, but also, that the whole fabric, with all the creatures therein, derive their existence from some Supreme Mind, who is the only Fountain of Being; we must certainly conclude, that that Self-existent Principle, or Source of all Beings, is by all means eternal, but there is no necessity at all that we should suppose all other things

* Πότερον ὁ κοσμος ἀιδιος, ἢ οὐ.

† Præterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo
Terræ et Cœli, semperque æterna fuere,
Cur supra bellum Thebanum et funera Trojæ,
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poetæ,
Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensque
Natura est mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.

to be coeval with it: nay, if it is not absolutely necessary, it is at least highly reasonable and consistent to believe the contrary.

For, that this world, compounded of so many and such heterogeneous parts, should proceed, by way of natural and necessary emanation, from that One First, Purest, and most Simple Nature, nobody, I imagine, could believe, or in the least suspect. Can it possibly be thought that mortality should proceed from the Immortal, corruption from the Incorruptible, and, what ought never to be so much as mentioned, even worms, the vilest animalcules, and most abject insects, from the Best, Most Exalted, and Most Blessed Majesty? But, if He produced all these things freely, merely out of His good pleasure, and with the facility that constantly attends almighty power, how much more consistent is it to believe, that this was done in time, than to imagine it was from eternity!

It is a very difficult matter, to argue at all about that, the nature whereof our most enlarged thoughts can never comprehend. And though, among philosophers and divines, it is disputed, whether such a production from eternity is possible or not, there is probably something concealed in the nature of the thing, though unknown to us, that might suggest a demonstration of the impossibility of this conceit. For, what is finite in bulk, power, and every other respect, seems scarcely capable of this infinity of duration; and divines generally place eternity among the incommunicable attributes of God, as they are called. It seems, to be sure, most agreeable to reason, and, for ought we know, it is absolutely necessary, that in all external productions by a free agent, the cause should be, even in time, prior to the effect; that is, that there must have been some point of time wherein the Being producing did, but the thing produced did not, exist. As to the eternal generation in which we believe, it is within God Himself, nor does it constitute any thing without Him, or different from His nature and essence. Moreover, the external production of a created being, of a nature vastly different from the Agent that is supposed to produce it, and to act freely in that production, implies, in its formal conception, (as the schools express it,) a translation from non-entity into being; whence it seems necessarily to follow, that there must have been some point of time, wherein that created being did not exist.

The notions of the Platonists concerning pre-existent matter, do not concern the present subject; but, to be sure, they are as idle and empty as the imaginary eternity of the world in its present form. As angels were not produced out of matter, it is surely surprising, that those who assert their creation by God, should find difficulty in acknowledging the production of other things without pre-existent matter, or even of matter itself. The celebrated maxim of the philosophers, that *out of nothing, nothing is produced*, we receive, but in a different and sounder sense, *viz.*, that nothing can be produced but either from pre-existent matter, or by a productive Power in which it was virtually contained. And, in this sense, this famous maxim affords an invincible demonstration *à posteriori*, (for the subject is not capable of any other,) to prove that there must be some Being that existed before any creature, and the Unity and Eternity of that Being.

The great Creator of the world, having all things virtually in Himself, needed neither matter nor instruments in order to produce them. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.* Psal. xxxiii. 6. These were His levers and tools, the word of the Lord, or that effectual act of His will which gave being to all things. "The mighty Lord of all, called directly to his holy, intelligent, and creating word, Let there be a sun, and a sun immediately appeared *." Here, *He spoke, and it was done.* "The word and the effect shewed themselves together†." If you ask what moved infinite Goodness to perform this great work; I answer, that very goodness you mention. For if, as they say, it is the nature of goodness to be always communicative, *that* Goodness, to be sure, must be the most diffusive, which is in itself greatest, richest, and so very immense, that it cannot be in the least diminished, much less exhausted, by the greatest munificence. Here, there is no danger that that should happen, which Cicero prudently cautions against, in the case of human goodness, *viz.*, "That liberality should undo itself‡." For that liberality must be immortal and endless, the treasures whereof are infinite.

Nor is it to be doubted, but from this very goodness, together with the immense power and wisdom which shine forth so brightly in the creation and all the creatures, an immense weight of glory is reflected upon the Creator Himself, and the source of all these perfections. Nor must it be denied, that the manifold wisdom of God proposed this end likewise. And there is nothing more certain than that, from all these taken together, His works, His benevolent and diffusive goodness, His power and wisdom illustrated in the creation, and the glory that continually results therefrom, from His wise counsels, and His own most perfect nature, whence all these things flow; nothing is more certain, I say, than that, from all these taken together, the Divine Majesty enjoys an eternal and inexpressible delight and satisfaction. And thus all things return to that vast and immense Ocean, from whence they at first took their rise, according to the expression in the Proverbs, *He hath made all things for Himself.* Prov. xvi. 4. And the words of the song in the Revelations are most express to this purpose: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created.* Rev. iv. 11. Nor could it, indeed, be otherwise, than that He who is the Beginning of all things, should also be the End of all; a wonderful Beginning without a beginning, and an End without an end. So that, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reasons concerning the oath of God, *As He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself;* in like manner we may argue here, as He could propose no greater end or design, He proposed Himself. It was the saying of Epicurus, "That the wise man does every thing for his own sake§:" we, who are otherwise taught, should rather say, that

* Ὁ δὲ πάντων κύριος ἐνθέως οὐφώνεσε τῷ ἑαυτοῦ ἄγνῳ καὶ νοητῷ καὶ δημιουργικῷ λογῳ ἔστω ἥλιος καὶ ἅμα τῷ φάναι, &c. Trismeg.

† Ἅμα ἔπος, ἅμα ἔργον.

‡ Ne liberalitate pereat liberalitas.

§ Sapientem omnia facere sui causa.

the wise man does nothing for his own sake, but all for that of God. But the most exalted, to be sure, and the Wisest of all beings, because He is so, must of necessity do all things for Himself; yet, at the same time, all His dispensations towards His creatures are most bountiful and benevolent.

That the world was made directly and immediately for man, is the doctrine, not only of the Stoics, but also of the master of the Peripatetic school: "We are," says he, "in some respect, the end of all things *." And in another place, "Nature has made all these things for the sake of man †." Cicero speaks to the same purpose ‡; and Lactantius more fully than either §. But Moses gives the greatest light on this subject, not only in his history of the Creation, but also in Deuteronomy, wherein he warns the Israelites against worshipping of angels, for this reason; because, says he, they were created for the service of man. And the sun, in Hebrew, is called Shemesh, which signifies a servant.

But O! whither do our hearts stray? Ought we not to dwell upon this pleasant contemplation, and even die in it? I should choose to be quite lost in it, and to be rendered altogether insensible, and, as it were, dead to these earthly trifles that make a noise around us. O sweet reciprocation of mutual delights! *The Lord shall rejoice in His works*, says the Psalmist; and presently after, *My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.* Psal. civ. 31—4. Let us look sometimes to the heavens, sometimes to the sea and the earth, with the animals and plants that are therein, and very often to ourselves: and in all these, and in every thing else, but in ourselves particularly, let us contemplate God, the common Father of all, and our most exalted Creator, and let our contemplation excite our love.

They who have sent the ignorant and unlearned to pictures and images, as books proper for their instruction, have not acted very wisely; nor has that expedient turned out happily or luckily for the advantage of that part of mankind. But surely, this great volume, or system, which is always open and exposed to the view of all, is admirably adapted to the instruction both of the vulgar and the wise; so that Chrysostom had good reason to call it "The great book for the learned and unlearned ‖." And the saying of St. Basil is very much to the purpose: "From the beauty of those things which are obvious to the eyes of all, we acknowledge that His inexpressible beauty excels that of all the creatures; and from the magnitude of those sensible bodies that surround us, we conclude the infinite and immense goodness of their Creator, whose plenitude of power exceeds all thought, as well as expression ¶."

For this very end, it evidently appears that all things were made,

* Sumus enim et nos quodammodo omnium finis. 2 Phys. tit. 23.

† Natura hominum gratia omnia fecit.

‡ De legibus.

§ Sol irrequietis cursibus et spatiis inequalibus orbes conficit, &c. ad finem capitis, De ira Dei. Cap. 13, 14.

‖ Βιβλίον μέγιστον καὶ ἰδιώταις καὶ σόφοις.

¶ Ἐκ τοῦ κάλλους τῶν ὁρωμένων τὸν ὑπέρκαλλον ὑπονοοῦμεθα καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μεγέθους τῶν αἰσθήτων τούτων καὶ περιεχομένων σωμάτων ἀναλογιζόμεθα ἄπειρον καὶ ὑπερμεγέθη καὶ πᾶσαν διάνοιαν ἐν τῷ πλήθει τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως ὑπερβαίνοντα. Alex. hom. i.

and we are the only visible beings that are capable of this contemplation. "The world," says St. Basil, "is a school, or seminary, very proper for the instruction of rational souls in the knowledge of God *." We have also the angels, those ministers of fire, to be spectators with us on this theatre. But will any of us venture to conjecture what they felt, and what admiration seized them, when they beheld those new kinds of creatures rising into being, and those unexpected scenes that were successively added to the preceding ones, on each of the six days of that first remarkable week, *when he laid the foundations of the earth, and placed the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

But O,! the stupidity of mankind! All those stupendous objects are daily around us; but, because they are constantly exposed to our view, they never affect our minds: so natural is it for us to admire new, rather than grand objects. Therefore, the vast multitude of stars which diversify the beauty of this immense body, does not call the people together; but when any change happens therein, the eyes of all are fixed upon the heavens. "Nobody looks at the sun, but when he is obscured; nobody observes the moon, but when she is eclipsed; then nature seems to be in danger; then vain superstition is alarmed, and every one is afraid for himself †." "But surely," says St. Bernard, concerning the sun and moon, "these are great miracles, very great to be sure; but the first production, or creation of all things, is a vast miracle, and makes it easy to believe all the rest; so that, after it, nothing ought to excite our wonder ‡."

LECTURE XII.

Of the Creation of MAN.

THIS great theatre being built, besides those spectators who had been but lately placed in the higher seats, it pleased the supreme Creator and Lord to have another company below, as it were, in the area: these He called forth into being by creation, and a man was introduced into this area, to be a spectator of Him and of His works, yet not a spectator only, but also to be the interpreter of them §." Nor yet was man placed therein merely to be a spectator and an interpreter; but also, in a great measure, to be possessor and lord thereof; or, as it were, the Creator's "substitute ||," in a spacious and convenient house, ready-built, and stored with all sorts of useful furniture.

Now, that man himself is a grand and noble piece of workmanship,

* Ὁ κόσμος ψυχῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλίον καὶ τῆς θεογνωσίας παιδευτήριον. Alex. hom. i.

† Sol spectatorem, nisi cum deficit, non habet; nemo observat lunam nisi laborantem; tunc orbes conclamant, tunc pro se quisque superstitione vana trepidat. Seneca.

‡ Magna sunt hæc miracula, magna nimis ita est; miraculum autem immensum est ipsa prima omnium productio, seu creatio, quæ miraculorem omnium adeo facilem fidem facit, ut post eam nihil sit mirum.

§ Ὡς θεατήν τε αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ ἔργων καὶ οὐ μόνον θεατήν ἀγγελῶν καὶ ἐξηγήτην. Arrian.

‖ Ὑποκατάστατον.

appears even from this circumstance, that the Most Wise Operator when he was going to create him, thought fit to preface His design with these words, *Let us make man.* So that he was created not merely by a word of command, like the rest of the creatures, but "by a consultation of the blessed Trinity*."

And, indeed, man is a wonderful composition, the conjunction of heaven and earth; "the breath of God, and the dust of the ground:" the bond of union between the visible and the invisible world, and truly a "world in miniature, a kind of mixed world, nearly related to the other two †." Nor is he only a lively epitome and representation of the greater world, but also dignified with the image of his great Creator. He made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the stars, and then, all sorts of living creatures; but, in the words of the poet, "a more divine creature, and more capable of elevated sentiments, was yet wanting, and one that could rule over the rest; therefore man was born ‡."

The rest of the creatures, according to the observation of the schoolmen, which is not amiss, had the impression of the Divine foot stamped upon them, but not the image of the Deity. These He created, and reviewing them, found them to be *good*, yet He did not rest in them: but, upon the creation of man, the Sabbath immediately followed. He made man, and then rested, having a creature capable of knowing that He was his Creator, one that could worship Him, and celebrate his sabbath, whose sins, if he should commit any, He might forgive, and send, clothed with human nature, His only begotten Son, *in whom He is* absolutely *well pleased*, and over whom, as the person who fulfilled His good pleasure, He rejoices for ever, to redeem His favourite creature. By the production of man, the Supreme Creator exhibited Himself in the most admirable light, and at the same time, had a creature capable of admiring and loving Him; and, as St. Ambrose observes, "one that was under obligation to love his Creator the more ardently, the more wonderfully he perceived himself to be made §." "And man," says the same author, "was made a two-footed animal, that he might be, as it were, one of the inhabitants of the air, that he might aspire at high things, and fly with the wings of sublime thoughts ‖."

And, indeed, the structure of man is an instance of wonderful art and ingenuity, whether you consider the symmetry of his whole fabric taken together, or all his parts and members separately. Gregory Nyssen speaks very much to the purpose, when he says, "the frame of man is awful and hard to be explained, and contains in it a lively

* Faciamus hominem. Ut non solo jubentis sermone sicut reliquia, sed consilio sanctæ Trinitatis conditus sit. Arnob.

† Μικροκοσμος, μικτός τις κόσμος, συγγενὴς τῶν δύο κόσμων. Greg. Nyss.

‡ Sanctius his animal, mentisque; capacius altæ.
Deerat ad hoc, et quod dominari in cætera posset,
Natus homo est.—Ovid. 1 Met.

§ Et quidem tanto ardentius amaret conditorem, quanto mirabilius se ab eo conditum intelligeret.

‖ Et factus est homo bipes, ut sit unus quasi de volatilibus, qui alta visu petat, et quodam remigio volitet sublimum cogitationum.

representation of many of the hidden mysteries of God *." How wonderful is even the structure of his body! Which, after all, is but the earthen case of his soul; accordingly, it is in the Chaldaic language called *Nidne*, which signifies *a sheath.* How far does the workmanship exceed the materials! And how justly may we say, What a glorious creature out of the meanest elements! The Psalmist's mind seems to have dwelt upon this meditation, till he was quite lost in it; *How fearfully*, says he, *and wonderfully am I made!* Psal. cxxxix. 14. And that celebrated physician who studied nature with such unwearied application, in his book upon the structure of the human body, in which, after all, there is nothing divine, often expresses his admiration in these words, "Who is worthy to praise the wisdom and power of the Creator †!" and many other such exclamations. The Christian writers, however, are most full upon this subject, particularly St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and others, who carry their observations so far as the nails, and the hair, especially that on the eye-lids. And Nyssen, on the words, *Let us make man*, has the following observation: "Man is a grand and noble creature.—How can man be said to be any great matter, seeing he is a mortal creature, subject to a great many passions; from the time of his birth, to that of his old age, exposed to a vast many evils and distresses; and of whom it is written, *Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest be mindful of him?*

"The history we have of the production of man, delivered me from this difficulty; for we are told, that God took some of the dust of the earth, and out of it formed man: from these words I understood, that man was at once nothing, and yet something very grand ‡." He intended to say, that the materials out of which man was made were low, and as it were, nothing; but, if you consider the wonderful workmanship, how great was the honour conferred upon him! "The earth did not spontaneously produce man, as it did grasshoppers. God did not commit the production of this or that particular creature to his ministering powers; no, the gracious Creator took the earth in His own hand §." But besides the noble frame of his body, though it was made of the dust of the earth, that Divine breath, and, by means of it, the infusion of a precious soul, mixes heaven and earth together; not indeed in the common acceptation of that term, as if things so vastly different were promiscuously jumbled together, and the order of nature subverted; but only implying that the two parts of the human constitution are compounded with inexpressible art, and joined in a close union. As to the misery of the human race, and the contemptible figure in which the life of man appears, it is to be ascribed to another source, very different from the earthly materials out of which his

* Ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατασκευὴ φοβερὰ τὶς καὶ δυσερμήνευτος καὶ πολλὰ καὶ ἀπόκρυφα ἐν αὐτῇ μυστήρια θεοῦ ἐξεικώνιζουσα.

† Τὶς ἵκανος ἐσὶ τὴν δημιουργοῦ σοφίαντέ καὶ δύναμιν επαινεῖν.

‡ Μέγα ἄνθρωπος καὶ τιμίον. Ἀλλὰ πῶς μεγὰ ὁ ἄνθρωπος; τό ἐπικηρον ζωον τὸ μυρίοις πάθεσιν ὑποκειμενον, το ἐκγέννητῆς ἐις γῆρας μυρίων κακῶν ἐσμόν ἐξαντλουν Περὶ οὗ ἔι πηται. Κύριε τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὁτὶ μιμνήσκη αὐτοῦ; &c. ἄλλὰ μοι την τοιάυτην διαπόρήσαν ἔλυσεν ἱστορόα τῆς γεννήσεως του ἀνθρώπου ἀναγνωσθεισα, &c. Orat ii.

§ Ουκ ἡ γῆ ἀυτομάτος ὥπερ, τους τέττιγαο ἐξέβασε, ἄλλ' οὐκ εἶπε τῶδε καὶ τῶδε ποιῆσαι λεῖτουργῖκαις δυγάμεσιν, ἄλλ ἰδιὰ χειρὶ φιλοτεχνεῖ γῆν ἔλαβεν.

body was made. That he was created happy, beautiful, and honourable, he owed to his great and good Creator; but he himself is the author of his own misery. And hence it is, that though, with regard to his original and pure nature, we ought, for the strongest reasons, to speak more honourably of him than of any other part of the visible world; yet, if we view him in his present circumstances, no part of the creation, to be sure, deserves to be lamented in more mournful strains.

But what words can express, what thoughts can comprehend, the dignity and powers of that heavenly soul that inhabits this earthly body, and the Divine image that is stamped upon it? The philosophers of all ages and nations have been inquiring into the nature of it, and have not yet found it out.

A great many have also amused themselves with too whimsical conjectures and fancies, and have endeavoured to discover, by very different methods, a figure of the blessed Trinity in the faculties of the soul. Nor was Methodius satisfied with finding a representation of this mystery in the soul of every particular man, but also imagined he had discovered it in the three first persons of the human race, *viz.* Adam, Eve, and their first-born son; because in them he found *unbegotten*, *begotten*, and *proceeding*, as also *unity* of nature, and the *origination* of all mankind. But not to insist upon these, it is certain the rational, or intellectual, and immortal soul, so long as it retained its original purity, was adorned with the lively and refulgent image of the Father of Spirits, its eternal Creator; but afterwards, when it became polluted and stained with sin, this image, though not immediately quite ruined, was, however, miserably obscured and defaced. It is true, the beautiful and erect frame of the human body, which gives it an advantage over all other creatures, and some other external graces that man possesses, may possibly be some reflected rays of the Divine excellence; but I should hardly call them the image of God. As St. Ambrose well observes, "How can flesh, which is but earth, be said to be made after the image of God, in whom there is no earth at all? And shall we be said to be like God, because we are of a higher rank than sheep and does*?"

The dominion over the rest of the creatures which man enjoys, is a kind of faint shadow of the absolute and unlimited sway of the Supreme Majesty of heaven and earth. I dare not, however, venture to say, it is that image of which we are speaking; but, as those who draw the picture of a king, after laying down the lineaments of the face and body, use to add the purple robe and other ensigns of royalty, this dominion may certainly supply the place of these, with regard to this image of God on man. But the lively colours in which the image itself is drawn, are, says Nyssen, "purity, absence of evil, understanding, and speech†." For even the eternal Son and the Wisdom of the Father, seems to be intended by the philosophers under the term of The *Creating Mind*‡; and by the divine apostle, John, he is called

* Caro terra est, qui dicatur ad imaginem Dei facta, cum in Deo terra non sit? et an eo Dei similes dicemur, quia damulis atque ovibus celsiores sumus?

* Καθαρότης, κακου αλλοτρίωσις, νους, καὶ λόγος.

‡ Δημιουργου.

The Word. To these we have very good ground to add, charity, as nothing can be named that renders man liker to God*; for "God is love, and the fountain of it†." It is true, charity is a valuable disposition of the mind, but it also discovers itself in the frame of the human body; for man was made quite defenceless, having neither horns, claws, nor sting, but naked and harmless, and, as it were, entirely formed for meekness, peace, and charity.

The same author, speaking of the image of God on man, expresses himself as follows: "Wherefore, that you may be like God, exercise liberality and beneficence, study to be innocent, avoid every crime, subdue all the motions of sin—conquer all the beasts that are within you. What, you will say, have I beasts within me? Yes, you have beasts and a vast number of them. And that you may not think I intend to insult you, is anger an inconsiderable beast, when it barks in your heart? What is deceit, when it lies hid in a cunning mind; is it not a fox? Is not the man who is furiously bent upon calumny, a scorpion? Is not the person who is eagerly set on resentment and revenge, a most venomous viper? What do you say of a covetous man; is he not a ravenous wolf? And is not the luxurious man, as the prophet expresseth it, a neighing horse? Nay, there is no wild beast but is found within us. And do you consider yourself as Lord and prince of the wild beasts, because you command those that are without, though you never think of subduing or setting bounds to those that are within you? What advantage have you by your reason, which enables you to overcome lions, if, after all, you yourself are overcome by anger? To what purpose do you rule over the birds, and catch them with gins, if you yourself, with the inconstancy of a bird, are hurried hither and thither, and sometimes, flying high, are ensnared by pride, sometimes brought down and caught by pleasure? But, as it is shameful for him who rules over nations to be a slave at home, and for the man who sits at the helm of the state to be meanly subjected to the beck of a contemptible harlot, or even of an imperious wife; will it not be, in like manner, disgraceful for you, who exercise dominion over the beasts that are without you, to be subject to a great many, and those of the worst sort, that roar and domineer in your distempered mind‡?"

I shall, last of all, here subjoin what some of the ancients have observed, viz., that the nature of the human soul, as it lies hid out of sight, and is to us quite unknown, bears an evident resemblance to that of God, who is Himself unsearchable and past finding out§.

"But when we have well considered all these things, and the many other thoughts of this kind that may occur, may we not cry out, How surprising and shocking is the madness and folly of mankind; the far greater part whereof, as if they had quite forgot their original and

* Θειοειδέστερόν.

† Ἀγάπη ὁ Θεός, καὶ ἀγαπῆς σπηγή.

‡ Θεῷ δοὺν μοιος ἴσῃ διὰ τῆς χρηστότητος, διὰ τῆς ἀνεξικακίας. διὰ κοι, νωνίας, μισοπονηρός ὢν καὶ κατάκρατῶν τῶν πάθων τῶν ἐνδον, ἄρχε θηρίων. τὶ οὖν ἰρεῖς, ἐγω θήρια ἔχω ἐν ἐμαυτῳ; καὶ μυρία πολὺν ἔχλον ἐν σοὶ θηρίων ἔχεις, καὶ μὴ ὕδουν νομισας εἶναι σὸ λεγόμενον. Πόσον θηρίον ἐστὶν ὁ θύμος ὅταν ὀλακσῆ τῆ καρδία, &c.

§ Κατ' εἰκὼνα τυπικὴν τοῦ ἀνωνύμου, καὶ ἀγνωριστοῦ Θεοῦ.

native dignity, disparage themselves so far as to pursue the meanest objects, and shamefully plunge themselves in mud."

The words of Epictetus are divine, and have a wonderful savour of piety: "You go to the city of Olympia," says he, "to see some of the works of Phidias; but you have no ambition to convene, in order to understand and look at those works which may be seen without travelling at all. Will you never understand what you are, nor why you were brought into the world; nor, finally, what that is which you have now an opportunity to view and contemplate*?" And in another place, "For, if we were wise, what have we else to do, both in public and in private, but to praise and celebrate the Deity, and to return our thanks to Him? Ought we not, while we are digging, plowing, and eating, to sing to God this hymn? Great is the Lord, who has provided us with those necessaries of life†," &c.

As for you, young gentlemen, I would have you to be sensible of the honour and dignity of your original state; and to be deeply impressed with the indignity and disgrace of your nature, now fallen and vitiated. And dwell particularly upon the contemplation of it. Suffer not the great honour and dignity of the human race, which is to know the Eternal and invisible God, to acknowledge Him, love Him, and worship Him, to decay and die away within you. This, alas! is the way of the far greater part of the world; but do you live in continual remembrance of your original, and assert your claim to Heaven, as being originally from it, and soon to return to it again.

LECTURE XIII.

Of Providence.

The doctrines we have been handling, are the great supports of faith, piety, and the whole of religion: wherefore, it is most just, that the zeal and care of the scholars should concur with that of their teachers, to have them well secured in the mind and affections; for, "a weak foundation," as the lawyers observe, "is the ruin of the work‡." There are two principal pillars, and, as it were, the Jachin and Boaz of the living temples of God, which the Apostle to the Hebrews lays down in these words: *He that cometh to God* (under which expression are comprehended every devout affection and every act of religious worship) *must believe that* God *is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* Heb. xi. 6.

That God *is*, implies not only that He is eternal and self-existent, but also, that He is, to all other beings, the spring and fountain of what they are, and what they have; and consequently, that He is the

* Εις ὀλυμπίαν μὲν ἀποδημεῖσαι, ἵν' εἰδῆτε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ φειδιοῦ—ὕστου δὲ οὐδ' ἀποδημῆσαι χρέια ἐστιν ταυτα δὲ θεάσασθαι καὶ καταναῆσαι οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσετε οὐκ αἰσθήσεσθε τοίνυν οὔτε τίνες ἐστέ, οὐτέ ἐπὶ τί γεγόνατε, οὐτ' ἐστὶ τί τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἐφ' ὁ σον θέαν παρειλήφατε. Arr. lib. i. cap. 6.

† Ἐι γαρ νοῦν εἴχομεν, ἀλλὸ τι ἔδει ὑμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῆ καὶ ἰδία ἡ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ εὐφημεῖν καὶ ἐπιέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; οὐκ ἐδει καὶ σκάπτοντας καὶ ἀροῦντας καὶ ἐσθίοντας ἄδειν, μέγας ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἡμῖν πάρεσχεν ὄργανα ταυτα. Ibid. cap. 16.

‡ Debile enim fundamentum fallit opus.

wise and powerful Creator of angels and men, and even of the whole universe. This is the first particular, that God *is*. The second, *that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*, ascertains the *providence and government of God*, exemplified in its most eminent effect, with regard to mankind. For providence extends further than this, and comprehends in it a constant preservation and support of all things visible and invisible, whether in heaven or earth, and the sovereign government and disposal of them. Mechanics, when they have completed houses, ships, and other works they have been engaged in, leave them to take their fate in the world, and, for the most part, give themselves no further trouble about the accidents that may befal them. But the supreme Architect and wise Creator never forsakes the work of his hands, but keeps his arms continually about it, to preserve it; sits at the helm to rule and govern it; is Himself in every part of it, and fills the whole with His presence. So great a fabric could not possibly stand without some guardian and ruler; nor can this be any other than the Creator Himself. For who can pay a greater regard to it, support it more effectually, or govern it with greater wisdom, than He who made it? "Nothing can be more perfect than God; therefore, it is necessary the world should be governed by him," says Cicero. And "they who take away providence, though they acknowledge God in words, in fact deny him*."

If we believe that all things were produced out of nothing, the consequence is, that, by the same powerful Hand that created them, they must be preserved and supported, to keep them from falling back into their primitive nothingness. It must be also owned, that, by the same powerful Hand, the regular motions of the stars, the contexture of the elementary world, the various kinds of creatures, and the uninterrupted succession of their generations, are continued and preserved. Nor is Divine providence to be confined within the heavens, or in the lower world, restrained to the care of generals in opposition to individuals; although the Peripatetic school inclined too much to this opinion, and, even the master of that school, Aristotle himself, in his often quoted book, if it really be his, *De Mundo*. For, that providence extends to all things in this lower globe, from the highest to the lowest, and comprehends within its sphere particular as well as general things, the least as well as the greatest, is confirmed, not only by the doctrine of the sacred Scripture, but also by the testimony of all sound philosophy.

Therefore, in maintaining the doctrine of Providence, we affirm, 1st. That the Eternal Mind has an absolute and perfect knowledge of all things in general, and every single one in particular. Nor does He see only those that are actually present, as they appear in their order upon the stage of the world, but, at one view, comprehends all that are passed, as well as that are to come, as if they were actually present before him†. This, the ancient philosopher Thales is said to have asserted expressly, even with regard to the hidden motions and most

* Nihil Deo præstantius, ab eo igitur regi necesse est. Qui providentiam negant, verbis licet Deum ponunt, reipsa tollunt.

† Τα τ' ὄντα τα τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα.

secret thoughts of the human mind: for, being asked, "If any one, that does evil, can conceal it from God?" he answered, "No, not even his evil thoughts*." "Nothing is left unprovided for," says St. Basil, "nothing is overlooked by God: His watchful eye sees all things; He is present every where to give salvation to all †." Epictetus has also the same divine thoughts upon this subject ‡.

And here, were any one to reflect seriously on the vast number of affairs that are constantly in agitation in one province, or even in one city, the many political schemes and projects, the multiplicity of law matters, the still greater number of family affairs, and all the particulars comprehended under so many general heads, he would be amazed and overpowered with the thoughts of a knowledge so incomprehensibly extensive. This was the very thought which excited the divine Psalmist's admiration, and made him cry out with wonder and astonishment, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it.* Psal. cxxxix. 6.

2dly, He not only knows all things, and takes notice of them, but He also rules and governs them. *He hath done whatever he pleased in the heavens and the earth,* says the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxv. 6. And *He worketh all things,* says the Apostle, *according to the council of His own will.* Eph. i. 11. He does all things according to his pleasure, but that pleasure is influenced by His reason; all things absolutely, but yet all things with the greatest justice, sanctity, and prudence.

He views and governs the actions of man in a particular manner: He hath given him a law: He hath proposed rewards, annexed punishments to enforce it, and engage man's obedience. And having discovered, as it were, an extraordinary concern about him, when He made him (as we have observed upon the words, *Let us make man,*) in like manner, He still continues to maintain an uncommon good-will towards him, and so to speak, an anxious concern about him. So that one of the ancients most justly called man "God's favourite creature." And he spoke much to the purpose, who said, "God is neither a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of mankind §." With regard to the justice of the supreme government of Providence, we meet with a great deal, even in the ancient poets.

"O father Jove," says Æschylus, "thou reignest in heaven, thou takest notice of the rash and wicked actions of gods and men. Thy care even extends to the wild beasts; thou observest the wrongs done them, and securest their privileges ||."

"Though justice," says Euripides, "comes late, it is still justice: it

* Ἐι Θεὸν τὶς λάθοι κακὸν τὶ πράσσων; ἀλλ οὐδὲ διανούμενος.

† Οὐδὲν ἀπρονόητον, οὐδὲν ἠμελημενον παρὰ Θεῷ ταυτα σκοπέυει ὁ ἀκοίμητος ὄφθαλμος πᾶσί πάρει, σκορπιζων ἑκαστω την σωτὰραιν.

‡ Arr. lib. i. cap. 12.

§ Ὁ Θεός οὐ Φίλιππος, οὔδε Φιλορνις ἀλλὰ φιλάνθρωπος.

|| Ω Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ζεῦ, σόν μεν οὐρανοῦ κράτος,
Συ δ' ἐργ' επουρανίων καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὁρᾶς
Λεωργά κᾴθεμιστα. Σοι καὶ θηρίων
Ὕβρις τέ καὶ δίκη μελει.

lies hid, as it were, in ambush, till it finds an opportunity to inflict due punishment upon the wicked man*."

"Dost thou think," says Æschylus, "to get the better of the divine knowledge, and that justice stands at a distance from the human race? She is near at hand, and sees without being seen; she knows who ought to be punished; but when she will suddenly fall upon the wicked, that thou knowest not†."

"The weight of justice," says the same author, in another place, "falls upon some quickly in the day-time, it lies in wait for some sins till the twilight; the longer it is delayed, the severer the punishment; accordingly, some are consigned to eternal night‡."

There are two difficulties, however, on this head, which are not easily solved. 1st, The success that commonly attends the wicked in this world, and the evil to which the good are exposed. On this subject, even the philosophers, pleading the cause of God, (which, if we take their word, they thought a matter of no great difficulty,) advanced a great many things. Seneca tells us, "There is a settled friendship, nay, a near relation and similitude between God and good men: he is even their father; but, in their education, he inures them to hardships. When, therefore, you see them struggling with difficulties, sweating, and employed in up-hill work; while the wicked, on the other hand, are in high spirits, and swim in pleasures; consider, that we are pleased with modesty in our children, and forwardness in our slaves; the former we keep under by severe discipline, while we encourage impudence in the latter. Be persuaded that God takes the same method. He does not pamper the good man with delicious fare, but tries him; he accustoms him to hardships, and (which is a wonderful expression in a heathen) PREPARES HIM FOR HIMSELF§." And in another place, "Those luxurious persons whom he seems to indulge and to spare, He reserves for evils to come. For you are mistaken, if you think any one excepted. The man who has been long spared, will at last have his portion of misery; and that he seems to have been

* Λίκα τοτ δὶκα χρόνιος
Αλλ' ὅμως ὑποπεσοῦσ'
'Ελάθεν ὅταν ἔχη
Τιν' ἀσεβῆ βροτῶν.

† Δοκεῖς τὰ θεῶν σὺ ξυνητὰ νικῆσάι ποτε
Καὶ τὴν δίκην ποῦ μακρ' ἀποικεῖσθαι βροτῶν;
'Η δ' ἐγγυς ἐστιν οὐχ ὁρωμένη δ' ὁρᾶ
'Ον χρὴ κογάζειν τ' ὄιδεν. Αλλ' ουκ οἶθα συ
'Οπόταν ἄφνω μολοῦσα διολέση κακοῦς.

‡ Ροπὴ δ' ἐπισκοπεῖ δίκας
Ταχεῖα τοὺς μὲν ἐν φάει
Τὰ δ' ἐν μεταιχμίω σκότου
Μένει, χρονίζοντ' ἄχη βρύει
Τοὺς δ' ἄκραντος ἔχει νὺξ.

§ Inter bonos viros ac DEUM est amicitia, imo necessitudo, et similitudo, imo ille eorum pater, sed durius eos educat, cum itaque eos videris laborare, sudare, et ardum ascendere, malos autem lascivire, et voluptatibus fluere, cogita, filiorum nos modestia delectare, vernularum licentia: illos disciplina tristiori contineri, horum ali audaciam. Idem tibi de DEO liqueat, bonum virum deliciis non innutrit, experitur, indurat, et SIBI ILLUM PRÆPARAT.

dismissed, is only delayed for a time*." And a vast deal more to this purpose. The same sort of sentiments we meet with in Plutarch: "God takes the same method," says he, "with good men, that teachers do with their scholars, when they exact more than ordinary of those children of whom they have the greatest hopes†." And it is a noble thought which we meet with in the same author: "If he who transgresses in the morning," says he, "is punished in the evening, you will not say that, in this case, justice is slow; but to God, one, or even several ages, are but as one day‡." How near is this to St. Peter's saying on the same subject! 2 Pet. iii. 8.

2dly, The other point upon this subject, which perplexes men fond of controversy, and is perplexed by them, is, how to reconcile human liberty with Divine providence, which we have taken notice of before. But, to both these difficulties, and to all others that may occur upon the subject, I would oppose the saying of St. Augustine: "Let us grant that he can do some things which we cannot understand§."

What a melancholy thing would it be to live in a world where anarchy reigned! It would certainly be a woful situation to all; but more especially to the best and most inoffensive part of mankind. It would have been no great privilege, to have been born into a world without God and without providence. For, if there were no Supreme Ruler of the world, then, undoubtedly, the wickedness of men would reign without any curb or impediment, and the great and powerful would unavoidably devour the weak and helpless, "as the great fishes often eat up the small, and the hawk makes havoc among the weaker birds‖."

It may be objected, that this frequently happens, even in the present world, as appears from the prophecies of Habakkuk, ch. i. ver. 15. But the prophet, immediately after, asserts, that there is a Supreme Power, which holds the reins in the midst of these irregularities; and though they are sometimes permitted, yet, there is a determinate time appointed for setting all things to rights again, which the just man expects, and, till it comes, *lives by faith*. Hab. ii. 3, 4. Some passages of Ariston's Iambicks are admirable to this purpose.

"*A*. Be patient; for God uses to support worthy men, such as you are, in a remarkable manner. And unless those who act in a becoming manner, are to receive some great reward, to what purpose is it, pray, to cultivate piety any longer? *B*. I wish that may be the case; but I too often see those who conform themselves to the rules of piety

* Eos autem quibus indulgere videtur, quibus parcere, molles venturis malis servat. Erratis enim si quem judicatis exceptum. Veniet ad illum diu felicem sua portio. Et qui videtur dimissus esse, delatus est. Sen. de Gubern. Mundi.

† Hanc rationem Deus sequitur in bonis viris, quam in discipulis suis preceptores, qui plus laboris ab iis exigunt, in quibus certior spes est. Plut. περὶ των βραδέως τιμωρουμένων.

‡ Si qui mane peccavit, vespere puniatur, tardum hoc non dices: at Deo seculum, vel etiam plura secula, pro die uno.

§ Demus illum aliquod facere, et nos non posse intelligere.

‖ ——— Pisces ut sæpe minutos
Magna comest, et aves enecat accipiter.

and virtue, oppressed by calamity; while those who mind nothing but what they are prompted to by private interest and profit, thrive and flourish much better than we. *A.* For the present it is so, indeed; but it becomes us to look a great way forward, and wait till the world has completed its full revolution. For it is by no means true, that this life is entirely under the dominion of blind chance, or fortune; though many entertain this wicked notion, and the corrupt part of mankind, from this consideration, encourage themselves in immorality; but the virtues of the good will meet with a proper reward, and the wicked will be punished for their crimes. For nothing happens without the will of Heaven*."

What the poets sometimes advance concerning a supreme Fate, which governs all things, they often ascribe to God; though now and then they forget themselves, and subject even the Supreme Being to their Fate, as the Stoic philosophers did also. But possibly they both had a sound meaning, though it was couched under words that sound a little harsh; and this meaning now and then breaks forth, particularly when they celebrate God for disposing all things, by an eternal law, according to his own good pleasure, and thereby make him the supreme and universal governor, subject to no other, but, in some respect, to himself, or to his decrees: which, if you understand them in a sound sense, is all that they can mean by their *το σοφώτατον* and their *το ἀμεταβλητον*. The same judgment is to be passed with regard to what we find said about Fortune: for either that word signifies nothing at all, or you must understand by it, the Supreme Mind, freely disposing of all things. And this is very clearly attested by the following excellent verses of Menander: "Cease to improve your minds, for the mind of man is nothing at all. The government of all things is solely in the hands of Fortune: whether this Fortune be a Mind, or the Spirit of God, or whatever else it is, it carries all before it. Human prudence is but a vapour, a mere trifle, *&c.*†"

We have also a great many proofs, that, in the opinion of the old poets, Fate and Fortune were precisely the same; one instance whereof we meet with in the following passage: "Fortune and fate, Pericles, are the givers of all that man enjoys‡."

And, instead of the terms, Fate, and Fortune, they sometimes used the word Necessity. But all these were but other names, though ill-chosen, for Providence. Euripides, having said a great deal concerning fate, or necessity, at last resolves the whole into this: "Jupiter executes, with thee, all he had decreed before §."

* Α. Φάρσει. Βοηθεῖν πάσιν τοῖσιν ἀξίοις
Εἴωθεν ὁ Θεός, &c.
† Παύσασθε νοῦν ἔχοντες, οὐδὲν γάρ πλέον
Ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς ἔστιν, αλλ' ὁ τῆς τύχης,
Εἴτ' ἔστι τοῦτο πνεῦμα θεῖον εἴτε νοῦς,
Τοῦτ' ἐστί παντὰ καὶ κυβερνῶν, καὶ στρέφων
Καὶ σωζον, ἡ πρόνοια δ' ἡ ξυνητή, κἀτνές,
Καὶ φλήναφας, &c.
‡ Πάντα τύχη καὶ μοῖρα, Περίκλεις ἄνδρι διδωσιν.
§ Καὶ γάρ Ζεύς, νίκαν
Συν σοι τουτο τελευτᾶ. Eurip. in Alcestide.

And Homer's words are very remarkable: "Jupiter," says he, "increases or diminishes the valour of men, as he thinks proper: for he is the most powerful of all*." And in another place: "Jove, from Olympus, distributes happiness to good and bad men in general, and every one in particular, as he himself thinks proper†."

Let us, therefore, look upon God as our Father, and venture to trust Him with our all. Let us ask and beg of Him what we want, and look for supplies from no other quarter. This, the indulgent father in Terence desired; and much more our Heavenly Father. And surely, every thing is better conducted by a dutiful love and confidence, than by an ignoble and servile fear; and we are very injurious both to Him and ourselves, when we think not, that all things, on His part, are managed with the greatest goodness and bounty. It is a true test of religion and obedience, when, with honourable thoughts, and a firm confidence in our Father, we absolutely depend upon Him, and serve Him from a principle of love. "Be not," says Augustine, "a froward boy, in the house of the Best of fathers, loving Him when He is fond of thee, and hating Him when He gives thee chastisement, as if, in both cases, He did not intend to provide an inheritance for thee‡." If we suppose this Providence to be the wisest and the best, it is necessary that in every instance our wills should be perfectly submissive to its designs; otherwise, we prefer our own pleasure to the will of Heaven, which appears very unnatural. St. Augustine, on the expression, *Upright in heart*, which we frequently meet with in the Psalms, makes an excellent observation: "If you cheerfully embrace," says he, "the Divine will in some things, but in others would rather prefer your own, you are crooked in heart, and would not have your crooked inclinations conformed to His upright intentions, but, on the contrary, would bend His upright will to yours §."

LECTURE XIV.

Of Christ *the* Saviour.

It is acknowledged, that the publication of the gospel is exceeding agreeable, and perfectly answers its original name, which signifies *good tidings*. How much sweeter is this joyful news, than the most ravishing and delightful concerts of music! Nay, these are the best tidings that were ever heard in any age of the world. O happy shepherds, to whom this news were sent down from heaven! Ye, to be sure, though watching in the fields, exposed to the severe cold of the night, were, in this, more happy than kings that slept at their ease in gilded beds; that the wonderful nativity of the Supreme King, begotten

* Ζευς δ' ἀρετὴν ἀνδρεσσιν ἐφέλλει τε μινύθει τε
"Οππως κεν ἐθέλησιν ὁ γαρ κάρτιστος ἁπάντων. Hom. Il. xx.

† Ζευς δ' ἀντὸς νέμει ὅλζον Ὀλύμπιος ἀνθρώποισιν
Ἐσθλοῖς ἠδὲ κακοῖσιν, ὅππως ἐθέλησιν ἑκάστῳ. Hom. Odyss. iv.

‡ Ne sis puer insulsus in domo optimi patris, amans patrem, si tibi blanditur, et odio habens, quando te flagellat; quasi non et blandiens, et flagellans hæreditatem paret.

§ Si voluntatem divinam in quibusdam amplecteris, in aliis tuam malles, curvus es corde, et non vis curvam tuam voluntatem ad illius rectam dirigere, sed illius rectam vis ad tuam curvam incurvare.

from eternity, that nativity which brought salvation to the whole world, was first communicated to you, and just at the time it happened. *Behold*, says the angel, *I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Saviour.* Luke ii. 10, 11. And immediately, a great company of the heavenly host joined the angel, and in your hearing sung, *Glory to God in the highest.* And indeed, then, in the strictest truth, "A most extraordinary child was sent down from the lofty heavens, &c.*" Whence also, his name was sent down along with him: *His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.* Matt. i. 21. "O sweet name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "honey in the mouth, melody in the ears, and healing to the heart." This is the Saviour, who, though we were so miserable, and so justly miserable, yet, would not suffer us to perish. Nor did he only put on our nature, but also our sins; that is, in a legal sense, our guilt being transferred to him. Whence we not only read, that *the Word was made flesh*, John i. 14, but also, that *he was made sin for us, who knew no sin:* 2 Cor. v. 12; and even, as we have it in the Epistle to the Galatians, ch. iii. v. 13, that he was *made a curse*, that from him an eternal blessing and felicity might be derived to us. The spotless Lamb of God bore our sins, that were devolved upon him: by thus bearing them, he destroyed them; and by dying for them, gained a complete victory over death. And how wonderful is the gradation of the blessings he procured for us! He not only delivered us from a prison and death, but presents us with a kingdom: according to that of the Psalmist, *Who redeemeth thee from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.* Psalm ciii. 4.

I believe there are none so stupid or insensible, as to refuse that these tidings are very agreeable and pleasing to the ear. But we may, not without some reason, suspect of the greatest part of nominal Christians, who commonly receive these truths with great applause, that it may be said to them, without any injustice, what is all this to you? These privileges are truly great and manifold, and indifferently directed to all to whom they are preached, unless they reject them, and shut the door against happiness offering to come in: and this is not only the case of a great part of mankind, but they also impose upon themselves by false hopes, as if it were enough to hear of these great blessings, and dream themselves happy, because these sounds had reached their ears. But, O unhappy men! what will all these immense riches signify to you, I must indeed say, if you are not allowed to use them, but rather, if you know not how to avail yourselves of them? I therefore earnestly wish that these words of the gospel were well fixed in your minds: *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.* John i. 10—12. *In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid*, Col. ii. 3; and without him, there is nothing but emptiness, because *in him all fulness doth dwell.* But what advantage can it be to us to hear these riches of our Jesus spoken of at great length, and to excellent purpose, or even to speak of them

* Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto, &c. VIRG. Ecl.

ourselves, if, all the while, we talk of them as a good foreign to us, and in which we have no concern, because our hearts are not yet open to receive him? What, pray, would the most accurate description of the Fortunate Islands, as they are called, or all the wealth of the Indies and the New World, with its golden mines, signify to a poor man half naked, struggling with all the rigours of cold and hunger? Should one, in these circumstances, I say, hear or read of these immense treasures, or should any one describe them to him in the most striking manner, either by word of mouth, or with the advantage of an accurate pen; can it be doubted, but this empty display of riches, this phantom of wealth and affluence, would make his sense of want and misery the more intolerable? Unless it be supposed, that despair had already reduced him to a state of insensibility. What further enhances the misery of those who hear of this treasure, and think of it to no purpose, is this, that there is no one of them, who is not miserable by choice, and a beggar in the midst of the greatest wealth; and not only miserable by choice, but obstinately so, from an invincible and distracted fondness for the immediate causes of his misery. "For who but a downright madman would reject such golden offers*?"

To give a brief and plain state of the case: to those who sincerely and with all their hearts receive him, Christ is *all things;* to those who receive him not, *nothing*. For, how can any good, however suitable or extensive, be actually enjoyed, or indeed any such enjoyment conceived, without some kind of union between that good and the person supposed to stand in need of it? *Behold*, says the Psalmist, *all those that are far from Thee, shall perish*. Psal. lxxiii. 27. To be united to God, is the great and the only good of mankind. And the only means of this union, is Jesus. In whatever sense you take it, he ought truly to be called the *union of unions;* who, that he might with the greater consistency, and the more closely, unite our souls to God, did not disdain to unite himself to a human body.

The great business of our life, therefore, young gentlemen, is this acceptance of Christ, and this inseparable union with him, which we are now recommending. Thrice happy, and more than thrice happy, are they who are joined with him in this undivided union, which no complaints, nor even the day of death can dissolve. Nay, the last day is happy above all other days, for this very reason, that it fully and finally completes this union, and is so far from dissolving it, that it renders it absolutely perfect and everlasting.

But, that it may be coeval with eternity, and last for ever, it is absolutely necessary that this union should have its beginning in this short and fleeting life. And pray, what hinders those of us that have not entered into this union before, to enter into it without delay? seeing the bountiful Jesus not only rejects none that come unto him, but also offers himself to all that do not wilfully reject him, and standing at the door, earnestly begs to be admitted. Oh, why do not these *everlasting doors open, that the King of glory may enter*, and reign within us? Nay, though he were to be sought in a far country, and with great labour, why should we delay, and what unhappy chains detain us? Why do we not, after shaking them all off, and even ourselves,

* Quis enim nisi mentis inops oblatum hoc respuat aurum?

go as it were out of ourselves, and seek him incessantly till we find him? Then, rejoicing over him, say with the heavenly Spouse, *I held him, and would not let him go;* and further add, with the same Spouse, that blessed expression, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* And, indeed, this interest is always reciprocal. No man truly receives Jesus, who does not at the same time deliver up himself wholly to him. Among all the advantages we pursue, there is nothing comparable to this exchange. Our gain is immense from both; not only from the acceptance of him, but also from surrendering ourselves to him. So long as this is delayed, we are the most abject slaves. When one has delivered himself up to Christ, then, and then only, he is truly free, and becomes master of himself. Why should we wander about to no purpose? To him let us turn our eyes, on him fix our thoughts, that he who is ours by the donation of the Father, and his own free gift, may be ours by a cheerful and joyous acceptance. As St. Bernard says on those words of the prophet, *to us a child is born, to us a son is given:* "Let us therefore make use of what is ours," "for our own advantage *." So then, let him be ours by *possession* and *use* †, and let us be his for ever, never forgetting how dearly he has bought us.

LECTURE XV.

Of Regeneration.

The Platonists divide the world into two, the sensible and the intellectual world: they imagine the one to be the type of the other, and that sensible and spiritual things are stamped, as it were, with the same stamp or seal. These sentiments are not unlike the notions which the masters of the cabalistical doctrine among the Jews, held concerning God's *sephiroth* and seal, wherewith, according to them, all the worlds, and every thing in them, are stamped or sealed. And these are probably near akin to what Lord Bacon of Verulam calls, his *parallela signacula*, and *symbolizantes schematismi*. According to this hypothesis, these parables and metaphors, which are often taken from natural things to illustrate such as are Divine, will not be similitudes taken entirely at pleasure, but are often, in a great measure, founded in nature and the things themselves. Be this as it may, that great change which happens in the souls of men by a real and effectual conversion to God, is illustrated in the Holy Scriptures by several remarkable changes, both natural and civil, particularly by *a deliverance from chains, prison, and slavery;* by *a transition from one kingdom to another*, and *from darkness to light;* by *a restoration from death to life;* by *a new creation;* by *a marriage;* and by *adoption*, and *regeneration*. Concerning this great change, as it is represented under the last of these figures, we propose, with Divine assistance, to offer a few thoughts from those words of St. John's gospel which we have already mentioned: *To as many as received him, to them gave he power*

* Puer natus est nobis, filius nobis datus est: utamur, inquit, nostro in utilitatem nostram.

† Κτησει και χρησει.

(or the privilege) *to become the sons of God.* John i. 12. Together with these words of our Saviour, in another place of the same gospel: *Except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* John iii. 3.

If, indeed, we consider the nature and the original of man, it is not without reason, that he is called the *son of God*, according to that passage which the Apostle, in his short, but most weighty sermon to the Athenians, quotes from the poet Aratus, and at the same time approves of, *For we are all His offspring**. Acts xvii. 28. Our first parent, in St. Luke's gospel, is also expressly called *the son of God;* Luke iii. *ult.* not only because he was created immediately by God, without any earthly father, but also, on account of the Divine image that was originally impressed upon the human nature.

And this glorious title, which distinguishes him from all other corporeal beings, he has in common with the angels, who are also so called in several places in the book of Job. Job i. 6; xxxviii. 7. It is indeed true, to use the words of St. Basil, that "every piece of workmanship bears some mark or character of the workman who made it†." For I should rather choose, in this case, to use the word *mark*, or *character*, than *likeness*. But of man alone it is said, *Let us make him after our own image.* And this distinction is not improperly expressed by the schoolmen, who say, as we have already observed, that all the other works of God are stamped with the print of His foot, but only man, of all the visible creation, honoured with the image or likeness of His face. And indeed, on account of this image or resemblance it is, that he is in dignity very nearly equal to the angels, though made inferior to them. Here it is to be observed, that this inferiority is but little, *Who was made*, saith the apostle, *a little lower than the angels.* Heb. ii. 9. So that, with regard to his body, he is nearly related to the brute creatures, and only a little superior to them with regard to temperament and the beautiful elegance of his frame, but made out of the very same materials, the same moist and soft clay, taken from the bosom of their great and common mother; whereas, to use the words of the poet, "The soul is the breath of God, which takes its rise from Heaven, and is closely united to his earthly body, like a light shut up in a dark cavern‡."

That Divine part of the human composition, derives its original from the Father of Spirits, in the same manner with those ministers of fire, who are not confined to corporeal vehicles; concerning whom, the oracle, having acknowledged one Supreme Divine Majesty, immediately subjoins, "And we angels are but a small part of God§."

And with regard to this principle which excels in man, which actually constitutes the man, and on account of which he most truly deserves that name, he is a noble and Divine animal. And whatever some fanciful and proud men may boast concerning their families, "if

* Του γαρ και γενος εσμεν.

† Παν το ιργαζομενον εχειν τινα του τικτονος τυπον.

‡ Ψυχη δ' εστιν ἀημα Θειου και μιξιν ἀνετλη
Ουρανιη χθονιοις, φαος σπηλυγγι καλυφθεν. Naz. de anima.

§ Μικρη δι Θειου μιξις ἀγγελοι ἡμεις.

we consider our original, and that God was the author of the human kind, none of Adam's race can be called ignoble*."

But if, on the other hand, we regard our woful fall which was the consequence of sin, we are all degenerate; we have all fallen from the highest honour, into the greatest disgrace, and the deepest gulf of all sorts of misery; we have given away our liberty and greatest dignity, in exchange for the most shameful and most deplorable bondage; instead of the *sons of God*, we are become the slaves of Satan: and if we now want to know to what family we belong, the Apostle will tell us, that we are *children of wrath*, and *sons of disobedience*†. Eph. ii. 2, 3.

But, as the overflowing Fountain of goodness and bounty did not choose that so noble a monument of His wisdom should be entirely ruined by this dismal fall, could any one be more proper to raise it up again, or better qualified to restore men to the dignity of the sons of God, than His own eternal Son, who is the most perfect and express image of the Father? Nor does this glorious person decline the severe service. Though he was the son of his Father's love, the heir and lord of the whole universe; though he might be called the delight of his most exalted Father, and of all blessed spirits, and now, with the greatest justice, the darling of the human kind; yet, he left his Father's bosom, and, O wonderful condescension! became the son of man, that men might anew become the sons of God. Whence he is also called *The second Adam*, because he recovered all that was lost by the first.

That all who sincerely receive him, might be again admitted into the embraces of the Father, and no more be called *children of wrath*, he himself submitted to the punishment due to our disobedience; and, by bearing it, removed our guilt, and pacified justice. He also went into the flames of Divine wrath, to deliver us from them; and by a plentiful stream of his most precious blood, quite extinguished them. He likewise took effectual care that those who were no longer to be called *children of wrath*, should also cease to be *children of disobedience*, by pouring out upon them a plentiful effusion of his sanctifying Spirit; that their hearts being thereby purged from all impure affections and the love of earthly things, they might, under the influence of the same good Spirit, cheerfully lead a life of sincere and universal obedience. Now, it cannot be doubted, that those who are so actuated and conducted by the Divine Spirit, are truly the *sons of God*. Whence that spirit, whereby they call *God their Father*, and with confidence apply to Him as such, is called *the Spirit of adoption*.

Moreover, this wonderful restoration is often called *adoption*, not only to distinguish it from the natural and incomparable dignity which belongs to the only begotten Son, but also, because we by no means derive this privilege from nature, but absolutely from the free donation of the Father, through the mediation of His only Son. We must not, however, conclude from this, that this privilege has nothing more in it

* Si primordia nostra,
Authoremque Deum spectes,
Nullus degener extat. Boeth. de Cons. Phil., lib. iii. met. 6.

† Τοῦ ἀπειθείας καὶ τέκνα ὀργῆς.

than an honourable title, or, as they call it, an external relation. For it is not only inseparably connected with a real and internal change, but with a remarkable *renovation*, and, as it were, a *transformation* of all the faculties of the soul, nay, even of the whole man. You will accordingly find these words applied to this purpose, by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, ch. xii. ver. 2. And, to conclude, it is with a view to convince us, that, together with the title of sons, the Spirit of God is given to believers, and they are inwardly renewed thereby, that we so often in Scripture meet with this *regeneration* which is the subject of our present discourse.

If we consider the lives of men, we shall be apt to imagine, that the generality of mankind who live in the world under the name of Christians, think it sufficient for them to be called by this name, and dream of nothing further. The common sort of mankind hear with pleasure, and delight of remission of sins, imputed righteousness, of the dignity of the sons of God, and the eternal inheritance annexed to that dignity; but when they are told, that repentance, a new heart, and a new life, contempt of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, fasting and prayer, are absolutely necessary for a Christian, *these are hard sayings, who can bear them?* Though at the same time it must be said, that they who do not regard these necessary duties, will have no share in the reward annexed to them.

There are many things which distinguish this Divine adoption from that which obtains among men. 1st, The former is not an expedient to supply the want of children, which is commonly the case among men; for God has His only begotten Son, who is incomparably preferable to all the rest taken together; who is immortal as His Father; and though, from a principle of wonderful humility, he condescended to become mortal, and even to die, yet he rose again from the dead, and liveth for ever. From him is derived all that felicity which our heavenly Father is pleased to confer upon us, out of His mere grace and bounty, through the merits and mediation of His dear Son. And is there any one on whom this felicity is bestowed, who will not freely acknowledge himself to be quite unworthy of so great an honour? Yet, such honour has the eternal and incomprehensible love of God condescended to bestow on us, who are quite unworthy and undeserving. And in this also, the Divine adoption differs from that which is customary among men, who generally choose the most deserving they can meet with: but all those whom God maketh choice of, are unworthy, and some even are remarkably so.

2dly, Men generally adopt but one apiece, or, at most, a few; but Divine adoption admits into the heavenly family a most numerous host, extending even unto myriads, that Jesus, who is the head of the family, *may be the first born among many brethren*, Rom. viii. 29.

And, 3dly, They are all *heirs*. Whence it is said, in another place, *That He might bring many sons unto glory*, Heb. ii. 10. Nor is the inheritance of any individual in the least diminished in consequence of so vast a multitude of heirs; for it is an *inheritance in light*, and every one has the whole of it. Nor do the children come into the possession of this inheritance by the death of the Father, but every one when he dies himself; for the Father is immortal, and, according

to the Apostle, *the only one that has immortality;* that is, in an absolute primary, and independent sense. Nay, He Himself is the eternal inheritance of His sons, and death alone brings them into His presence, and admits them into the full enjoyment of Him.

4thly, (Which I would have particularly observed,) This Divine adoption is not a matter of mere external honour, nor simply the bestowing of riches and an inheritance; but is always attended with a real internal change of the man himself to a being quite different from what he was before; (which is also recorded in Sacred Scripture, concerning Saul, when he was anointed king;) but this, human adoption can by no means perform. This last, in the choice of a proper object, justly pays regard to merit. For though the richest and even the best of men, may clothe richly the person whom he has thought proper to adopt, and get him instructed in the best principles and rules of conduct, yet, he cannot effectually divest him of his innate dispositions, or those manners that have become natural by custom; he cannot form his mind to noble actions, nor plant within him the principles of fortitude and virtue. But He who formed the heart of man, can reform it at His pleasure; and this He actually does: whenever He admits a person into His royal family, He, at the same time, endows him with royal and divine dispositions. And therefore, if He honours any person with His love, that person thereby becomes deserving; because, if he was not so before, He makes him so; He stamps His own image upon him in true and lively colours; and, as He is holy Himself He makes him holy likewise. Hence it is, that this Heavenly adoption is no less properly, truly, or frequently, in the sacred Scriptures, called, *regeneration.* [Παλιγγενεσία.] And though a Jew, and a celebrated doctor of the Jewish law, excepted against this doctrine, when it was proposed to him under this name; yet, neither all of that nation, nor even the Gentile philosophers, were quite unacquainted with it. Rabbi Israel calls proselytes, *new-born Jews.* And those passages which we frequently meet with, concerning the *seed of Abraham,* and, in the Prophets, concerning the numerous converts that were to be made to the Church, are, by their Rabbins, and the Chaldee paraphrase, applied to this spiritual generation, which they believed would remarkably take place in the days of the Messiah; particularly those two passages in the Psalms, in one whereof the spiritual sons of the Church are compared to the drops of the *morning dew,* Psal. xlv. 16; cx. 3; not only on account of its celestial purity, but also with regard to the vast multitude of them. Some of these doctors also observe, that the number of proselytes would be so great in the days of the Messiah, that the Church, omitting the ceremony of circumcision, would receive them into its bosom, and initiate them by ablution or baptism. Concerning this renovation of the mind, Philo Judæus says expressly, "God, who is unbegotten Himself, and begets all things, sows this seed, as it were, with his own hand, &c.*" Hierocles, and other Pythagorean philosophers, treat also of this moral or mystical regeneration; and under this very name, Plutarch also makes mention of it, and defines it to be "the mortification of irrational and irregular appetites.'

* Ἀγένητος ὁ Θεός, καὶτὰ σύμπαντά γίνων, σπείρει μεν τοῦτο το γέννημα τὸ ἴδιον, &c.

And Seneca's words relative to this subject are: "The families of the arts and sciences are the most noble; choose into which of them you will be adopted, for by this means we may be born according to our own choice; nor will you be adopted into the name only, but also into the goods of the family*."

Is not, also, the common custom that prevailed among the ancients, of honouring their heroes, and those men who were remarkable for exalted virtue, with the title of *sons of God*, a plain allusion to this adoption we have under our consideration? And what we have observed on the philosophers, who acknowledged this moral or metaphorical regeneration, is so very true, that it gave a handle to the fictions of those ancient heretics who evaded the whole doctrine and faith of the last resurrection, by putting this figurative sense upon it. As to what the Roman philosopher observes, that we may be born in this manner at our own pleasure or discretion, though to be sure it is not without our consent, yet, it does not altogether, nor principally depend upon us. Our sacred and apostolic doctrine presents us with much more just and pure notions on this subject when it teaches us, that *Of His own will He begat us by the word of truth.* Jam. i. 18. This is also represented in express terms in those words of the gospel which immediately follow the passage we mentioned at the beginning of this discourse. *Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* John i. 13. And, with great propriety, there is immediately added, another *generation* still more wonderful and mysterious, which is the principal and source of this renovation of ours: *The Word was made flesh.* For, to this end, God was pleased to clothe himself with our flesh, that He might put his Spirit within us, whereby we, though carnal in consequence of the corruption of our nature, might be born again into a new, spiritual, and Divine life. The Holy Ghost, by overshadowing the blessed virgin, was, in a very particular manner, the author of the human nature of the Son of God; and to the virtue and Divine power of the same Spirit, all the adopted children of the Deity owe their new birth. And as creation goes sometimes under the name of generation; (for instance, in the words of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 18.) *Of the Rock that begot thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee:* that book also of the Bible, which, from the first word of it, is called *Bereshith*, is by the Greeks named *Genesis*, and in the oldest copy of the Septuagint, *The generation of the world;* and, in the beginning of it, Moses, speaking of the creation of the world, says, *These are the generations of the heaven and the earth.* (Gen. ii. 4.) So on the other hand, this spiritual generation is called creation, and with an additional epithet, *the new creation.* It has also for its author, the same powerful Spirit of God, who of old sat upon the face of the waters as a bird upon its young, or as St. Basil renders it, *hatched:* so, also, in conversion the same Spirit rests upon our uninformed minds, that are lifeless, unprepared, and nothing at all but emptiness and obscurity, and out of this darkness brings forth light, which was the

* Nobilissimæ sunt ingeniorum familiæ, eligе in quam adsciscі velis, hac enim ratione, nobis ad arbitrium nostrum nasci licet; nec in nomen tantum adoptaberis, sed et in ipsa bona.

first and most beautiful ornament of the universe. To which the Apostle also alludes in his second epistle to the Corinthians, ch. iv. 6. The resurrection of the dead, is also the peculiar work of this living Spirit of God; and to Him the apostle Peter expressly ascribes the resurrection of Christ: *For Christ also*, says he, *hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* 1 Pet. iii. 18. And here, again, there is a mutual exchange of names; for, in the gospel according to Matthew, the resurrection of the dead is called the regeneration: *Verily, I say unto you*, says our Lord, *that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones.* Matt. xix. 28. Here, *In the regeneration*, must be connected with the following words, and by no means with those that go before. And that this was a common method of speaking among the Jews, appears from Josephus: "To those," says he, "whose fate it is to die for observing the law, God has given the privileges of being born again, and enjoying a more happy life, so that they are gainers by the exchange*." In like manner Philo saith, "We shall hasten to the generation after death, &c.†" On the other hand, it is very well known, that this spiritual regeneration we are speaking of, is often in Scripture called the resurrection.

Of this resurrection, the word of the gospel is, as it were, the trumpet; and, at the same time, the immortal seed of this new birth, and therefore, of immortality itself. Thus it is represented by the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 23, and by the apostle James, who expressly tells us, that *He hath begotten us with the word of truth.* Jam. i. 18. Now, the enlivening virtue and plastic power of this word is derived from the Holy Ghost, who is the true spring and fountain of this new life. Nor are the most extended powers of the human mind, or the strength of its understanding, any more able to restore this life within it, even upon hearing the glad tidings of the gospel, than it was capable of producing itself at first, or of being the author of its own being, or, after death, of restoring itself to life.

To this exalted dignity are admitted the humble, the poor, the obscure, the ignorant, barbarians, slaves, sinners, whom the world look upon as nothing, and hold in the greatest contempt: of these nothing is required but true and sincere faith; no learning, nor noble extract, nor any submission to the Mosaic law; but upon every man of whatever rank or condition, who believes this word, He in return bestows this dignity, *that they should become the sons of God;* that is, that what Christ was by nature, they should become by grace. Now, what is more sublime and exalted than this honour, that those who were formerly *children of Satan*, and *heirs of hell*, should by faith alone be made the *sons of God, brethren of Christ*, and *joint heirs* of the heavenly kingdom? If the sacred fire of the Romans happened at any time to be extinguished, it could only be lighted again at the rays of the sun. The life of souls, to be sure, is a sacred flame of

* Τοῖς ὑπὲρ νόμων διαφυλάξθεντων ἀποθανοῦσι δῶκεν ὁ Θεὸς γένεσθαι τὸ πάλιν καὶ βίον ἄμεινω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς. Lib. i. cont. App.

† Εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν ὁρμήσομεν μετα τὸν θάνατον.

Divine love: this flame, as we are now born into the froward race of fallen mankind, is, alas! but too truly and unhappily extinguished, and by no means to be kindled again, but by the enlivening light and heat of the *Sun of righteousness*, who is most auspiciously risen upon us.

LECTURE XVI.

Of Regeneration.

The great corruption of mankind, and their innate disposition to every sort of wickedness, even the doctors of the heathen nations, that is, their philosophers and theologers, and their poets also, were sensible of, and acknowledged; though they were quite ignorant of the source from which this calamity was derived. They all own, "That it is natural to man to sin*." Even your favourite philosopher, who prevails in the schools, declares that we are "*strongly inclined* to vice†;" and speaking of the charms and allurements of forbidden pleasures, he observes, that mankind by nature "is easily catched in these snares‡." The Roman Philosopher takes notice, "That the way to vice is not only a descent, but a downright precipice §." And the comic poet, "That mankind has always been in every respect, a deceitful, subtle creature ||." The satirist likewise observes, "That we are all easily prevailed on to imitate things that are in their nature wicked and disgraceful ¶." And the lyric poet, "That the human race, bold to attempt the greatest dangers, rushes with impetuosity upon forbidden crimes **."

All the wise men among the heathens exerted their utmost to remedy this evil by precepts and institutions of philosophy, but to very little purpose. They could not, by all their arts and all their precepts, make others better: nay, with regard to most of them, we may say, nor even themselves. But, "when there was no wisdom in the earth," says Lactantius, "that blessed doctor was sent down from heaven, who is the way, the truth, and the life††;" and, by an almighty power, effected what all others had attempted in vain.

It is not at all to be doubted, but the end proposed by philosophy, was to renew and reform mankind, and to reduce the course of their lives to a conformity with the precepts of wisdom and virtue. Whence, the common definition given of philosophy, is, "That it is the rule of life, and the art or science of living uprightly." To this purpose

* Συμφύτον εἶναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν.
† Εὐκαταφόρους. Arist. Eth. ii.
‡ Εὐήθρωτον εἶναι ὑπό τῶν τοιούτων.
§ Ad vitia, non tantum pronum iter, sed et præceps.
|| Δόλερος μὲν ἀεὶ κατὰ πάντα δὴ τρόπον.
Πίφυκεν ἀνθρωπος.
¶ ——— Dociles imitandis
Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus. Juv. Satyr. xiv.
** ——— Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas. Hor. Carm. lib. 1. Od. 3.
†† Sed cum nulla esset sapientia in terris, missus este cœlo doctor ille, via, veritas et vita.

Seneca says, "Philosophy is the law of living honestly and uprightly." True religion, to be sure, has the same tendency; but it promotes its end with much greater force, and better success; because its principles are much more exalted, its precepts and instructions are of greater purity, and it is, besides, attended with a Divine power, whereby it makes its way into the hearts of men, and purifies them with the greatest force and efficacy, and yet, at the same time, with the most wonderful pleasure and delight. And this is the *regeneration* of which we are speaking, and whereof we have already observed, that philosophy acknowledged it, even under the same name. But that it effected it, we absolutely deny. Now, it is evident from the very name, that we are to understand by it an inward change, and that a very remarkable one. And since God is called the author and source of this change, whatever the philosophers may have disputed, *pro* and *con*, concerning the origin of moral virtue, we are by no means to doubt but this sacred and Divine change upon the heart of man is produced by an influence truly Divine. And this was even Plato's opinion concerning virtue; nor do I imagine you are unacquainted with it. The same philosopher, and several others besides him, expressly asserted, that virtue was a kind of image or likeness of God, nay, that it was the effect of inspiration, and partook, in some respect, of a kind of Divine nature. "No mind can be rightly disposed without divine influence," says Seneca *. And it was the saying of the Pythagorean philosophers, "That the end of man is to be made like to God †." "This mind," says Trismegistus, "is God in man, and therefore some of the number of men are gods ‡." And a little further on, "In whatever souls the mind presides, it illustrates them with its own brightness, opposing their immoralities and mad inclinations, just as a learned physician inflicts pain upon the body of his patient, by burning and cutting it, in order to recover it to health: in the same manner, the mind afflicts a voluptuous soul, that it may pull up pleasure by the very roots. For all diseases of the soul proceed from it: impiety is the severest distemper of the soul §."

What wonder is it, then, if these very thoughts are expressed in the more Divine oracles of the sacred Scriptures more fully, and with greater clearness? and this confirmation of the human mind to the Divine nature, is commonly represented therein, as the great business and the end of all religion.

What was more frequently inculcated upon the ancient Church of the Jews, than these words, *Be ye holy, because I am holy?* And that the same ambition is recommended to Christians, appears from the first sermon we meet with in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, who came down to this earth, that he might restore the Divine image upon men. *Be merciful*, says he, *as your Father, who is in heaven, is merciful.* And, according to Luke, *Be perfect, as your Father is perfect.* And again, *Blessed are the pure in heart.* And, indeed, this is the

* Nulla sine Deo bona mens est.

† Τελος ἀνθρώπου ὁμοίωσις Θεῷ.

‡ Οὗτος ὁ νοῦς ἐν μὲν ἀνθρώποις Θεὸς ἐστίν, διὸ καὶ τίνες των ανθρώπων Θεοί εισι. [Trismeg.] περι του κοινου προς παν.

§ Ὅσαις ἂν νῦν ψύχαις, &c.

true beauty of the heart, and its true nobility; but vice introduces degeneracy, and deformity also.

Now, the more the mind disengages and withdraws itself from "matter that pollutes it*," that is, from the body it inhabits, the purer and more Divine it constantly becomes; because it attains to a greater resemblance with the Father of spirits, and, as the apostle Peter expresses, *partakes* more fully *of the Divine nature.* Hence it is, that the apostle Paul warns us at so great length, and in such strong terms, against *living after the flesh*, as the very death of the soul, and directly opposite to the renewed nature of a Christian. He that is *born of God* is endued with a greatness of soul, that makes him easily despise, and consider as nothing, those things which he prized at a very high rate before: he considers heaven as his country, even while he lives as a stranger on this earth; he aspires at the highest objects, and, flying up towards heaven, with soaring wings, he looks down with contempt upon the earth†."

And yet, with all this sublimity of mind he joins the deepest humility. But all the allurements of sin, though they continue to have the same appearance they had before, and possibly throw themselves in his way, as the very same that were formerly dear to him, he will reject with indignation, and give them the same answer as St. Ambrose tells us was given by a young convert to his mistress, with whom he had formerly lived in great familiarity: "Though you may be the same, I am not the same I was before‡."

Lactantius elegantly sets forth the wonderful power of religion in this respect: "Give me," says he, "a man that is passionate, a slanderer, one that is headstrong and unmanageable; with a very few of the words of God, I will make him as quiet as a lamb. Give me a covetous, avaricious, or close-handed person; I will presently make him liberal, and oblige him to give away his money in large quantities with his own hands. Give me one that is afraid of pain or of death; he shall, in a very little time despise crosses, flames, and even Phalaris's bull. Shew me a lustful person, an adulterer, a complete debauchee; you shall presently see him sober, chaste, and temperate§.' So great is the power of Divine wisdom, that, as soon as it is infused into the human breast, it presently expels folly, which is the source and fountain of sin, and so changes the whole man, so refines, and as it were renews him, that you would not know him to be the same. It is prophesied of the days of the Messiah, that *the wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, and the leopard lie down with the kid.* Isa. xi. 6. The Gospel has a wonderful effect in softening even the roughest

* Ἀπὸ της ὑλης βορβορώσης.

† ——— ——— udam
Spernit humum fugiente penna.

‡ At ego certe non sum ego.

§ Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem; jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, et pecuniam suam propriis plenisque; manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, et ignes, et Phalaridis taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, Ganeonem; jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis.

dispositions, and "there is none so wild, but he may be tamed, if he will but patiently give attention to this wholesome doctrine*."

Now, whether you call this renovation or change of the mind, repentance, or Divine love, it makes no difference; for all these, and, indeed, all the Christian graces in general, are, at bottom, one and the same, and, taken together, constitute what we may call *the health and vigour of the mind;* the term under which Aristo of Chios comprehended all the moral virtues. The Apostle Paul, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. vi. ver. 17, describes these adopted children of God by their repentance: in the Epistle to the Romans, they are characterized by their love, Rom. viii. 28; and in the passage of St. John's gospel we have mentioned already, by their faith, John i. 12. But whatever name it is conveyed by, the change itself is effected by the right hand of the Most High. As to the manner of this divine operation, to raise many disputes about it, and make many curious disquisitions with regard to it, would be not only quite needless, but even absurd. Solomon, in his Ecclesiastes, ch. xi. ver. 5, gives some grave admonitions with regard to the secret processes of nature in forming the fœtus in the womb, to convince us of our blindness with respect to the other works of God: how much more hidden and intricate, and even past our finding out, is this regeneration, which is purely spiritual! This is what our Saviour also teaches us, when he compares this new birth to the unconfined and unknown turnings and revolutions of the wind; a similitude which Solomon had lightly touched before, in that passage of the Ecclesiastes, to which we just now alluded. O! that we felt within ourselves this blessed change, though we should remain ignorant with regard to the manner of it; since we are sufficiently apprized of one thing, which it is greatly our interest frequently and seriously to reflect upon! *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* This spiritual progeny is also compared to the dew, the generation whereof is hidden and undiscovered. *Hath the rain a father, and who hath begotten the drops of the dew?* Job xxxiii. 28. Good men are also called *children of light*, and *light in the Lord*. 1 Thess. v. 5. Eph. v. 8. But it is from *the Father of lights* Himself, and from his only begotten Son, that these *stars* (for this title of the angels may, without injustice, be applied to them) derive all the light they enjoy. Now, the nature of light is very intricate, and the emanation and the manner of its production, is yet a secret even to the most sharp-sighted of those who have made nature their study, and no satisfactory theory of it has yet appeared. But, whatever it is, it was produced by that first and powerful word of Eternal and Uncreated Light. *Let there be light.* By the same powerful word of the Almighty Father, there immediately springs up in the mind which was formerly quite involved in the darkness of ignorance and error, a Divine and immortal light, which is *the life of men*, and, in effect, the true regeneration. And because this is the most effectual means of purifying the soul, it is ascribed to the *water* and to the *Spirit*. For this illumination of the Holy Ghost is,

* Nemo adeo feras est, ut non mitescere possit]
Huic modo doctrinæ patientam commodet aurem.

indeed, the inward baptism of the Spirit; but, in the primitive times of Christianity, the baptism of water, on account of the supposed concurrence of the Spirit, was commonly called the *illumination*, and the solemn seasons appointed for the celebration of this mystery, the days of *illumination* or *light*. And in the very same manner, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is by John Baptist called, the *baptism of fire*, on account of the wonderful influence it has in illuminating and purifying the soul. It is, to be sure, a celestial fire, quite invisible to our eyes, and of such a nature, that the secret communications of it to our souls cannot be investigated. But the sum of all is what follows.

It seemed good to Infinite Goodness and Wisdom, to form a noble piece of coin out of clay, and to stamp His own image upon it, with this inscription, "The earthly son of God:" this is what we call man. But, alas! how soon did this piece of coin fall back to clay again, and thereby lost that true image, and had the inscription shamefully blotted out! From that time, man, who was formerly a Divine creature, and an angel clothed with flesh, became entirely fleshly, and in reality a brute: the soul, that noble and celestial inhabitant of his earthly body, became now quite immersed in matter, and, as it were, entirely converted into flesh, as if it had drunk of the river Lethe. Or, like the son of an illustrious family, carried away in infancy to a far country, it is quite ignorant of its present misery, or the liberty and felicity it has lost, becomes an abject slave, degraded to the vilest employments, which it naturally and with pleasure performs; because, having lost all sense of its native excellency and dignity, and forgotten its heavenly original, it now relishes nothing but earthly things, and, catching at present advantages, disregards eternal enjoyments, as altogether unknown, or removed quite out of sight. But if in any particular soul, either from some spark of its native excellency still remaining alive, or any indistinct report that reaches it, some desires or emotions towards the recovery of its native liberty should arise; yet, as it has no sufficient strength of its own, nor finds any way open that can lead to so great a blessing, these ineffectual wishes come to nothing; and the unhappy soul having lost its hopes, languishes in its chains, and is at last quite stupified.

Philosophy, as we have already observed, perceiving that man was born to higher views than this world affords, attempted to raise him from his present dejection, secure his claim to heaven, and restore him to a conformity and likeness to God; but in vain. To redeem the sons of man, and restore them to what they had lost, it was necessary that the eternal Son of God should come down from heaven. Our fall was easily brought about, but our restoration was a work of the greatest difficulty, and only to be performed by the powerful hand of God. There are but few whom the exalted Father of spirits has loved, and Christ has raised up to heaven. He is the source whence the Spirit of God flows down to us; He is the fountain of that new life and sanctified nature, by which we mount towards God, whereby we overcome the world, and, in consequence thereof, are admitted into heaven. And, happy, to be sure, are those truly noble souls whose fate it is to be thus born again, to be admitted into the choirs of the holy angels, and to be clothed with those glorious robes that are whiter

than snow! They will follow the Lamb wherever he goes, and he will lead them to the crystal streams, and even to the fountain of life itself.

But all those that are to be the attendants of the Lamb in those blessed pastures which are to be met with in his heavenly country, must, of necessity, even while they live in this lower world, be followers of him in his humble innocence and purity. This spotless, holy, and pure Lamb of God, is the guide and shepherd of a pure and holy flock, a flock dear to God, and of distinguished beauty; but "the shepherd is still more beautiful than they*." But the impure goats and uncleanly hogs he beholds at a distance, and leaves them to unclean spirits, to be possessed by them at pleasure, and afterwards to be precipitated into the depth of misery; unless it be determined to deliver some of them from that shocking form, by a wonderful and Divine change, and to convert them into lambs, which is effected in proper time by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Whence they are called the holy, pure, and Divine sons of God; and all love to earthly things, all carnal, impure affections, are banished out of those hearts, which are, as it were, temples consecrated henceforth to God: "For the dwelling place of the Holy One must be holy also†."

LECTURE XVII.

Of TRUE FELICITY *and* ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

O HOW insipid and unsatisfactory are all the pleasures of this earthly life which we now live, in respect of that incomparable and altogether heavenly delight which attends the meditation and contemplation of Divine things! When mortals are thus employed, they eat the bread of angels: and if there are any who do not relish the sweetness of this food, it is because the Divine part of their composition is become brutish, and, forgetting its original, lies buried in earth and mud. But though the soul is reduced to these woful circumstances, it is not yet so entirely divested of itself, but it still retains some faint remains of its heavenly original and more exalted nature; insomuch that it cannot acquiesce in, or be at all satisfied with those fading enjoyments wherewith it is surrounded, nor think itself happy or easy in the greatest abundance of earthly comforts. And though, possibly, it may not be fully sensible of what it wants; yet it perceives, not without some pain and uneasiness, that something is still wanting to make it happy. The truth is, besides that great and unknown good, even those whom, by an abuse of that term, we call most happy, are in want of a great many things. For, if we look narrowly into the condition of those who are arrived at the highest pitch of earthly splendour, we shall certainly find some defect and imperfection in it, and be obliged to conclude with the poet, "That since the earth began to be inhabited by men, a full cup of good things, without any mixture

* Formosi pecoris custos formosior.

† "Αγιου γὰρ ἅγιον ἐστιν ἰδικητήριον.

of evil, never fell to the share of one man; a graceful body is often dishonoured by bad morals, and a mind of uncommon beauty is sometimes joined to a deformed body*," &c.

But what we call the chief and supreme good, must of necessity be complete, and entirely free from every defect; and, therefore, what is not in every respect perfect, properly speaking, is not perfect at all. The happiness of rich and great men, which the poor admire and respect, is only a gaudy and splendid species of misery. What St. Bernard says of the rash and ill-founded opinion which the generality of mankind form of the lives of the saints, from the imperfect knowledge they have of them, "They see our crosses, but they see not our comforts†," may be here inverted: we see the advantages of those men that are puffed up with riches and honours, but we see not their troubles and vexations. "I wish," says one, "that those who desire riches, would consult rich men; they would then, to be sure, be of another opinion‡."

I will spend no more time in describing or lamenting the wretched state of mankind on this earth, because it would answer no end. For, suppose a more complete assemblage of sublunary enjoyments, and a more perfect system of earthly felicity than ever the sun beheld, the mind of man would instantly devour it, and, as if it were still empty and unsatisfied, would require something more. And, indeed, by this insatiable thirst, the mind of man discovers its natural excellence and dignity; for thus it proves, that all things here below are insufficient to satisfy or make it happy; and its capacity is so great and extensive, that it cannot be filled by the whole of this visible frame of things. For, as St. Augustine observes, "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they return to Thee§." The mind that makes God its refuge, after it has been much tossed to and fro, and distressed in the world, enjoys perfect peace and absolute security; and it is the fate of those, and those only, who put into this safe harbour, to have what the same St. Augustine calls a very great matter, "The frailty of man, together with the security of God||."

Therefore, it is not without reason, that the royal Psalmist boasts not of his victories, nor the splendour of his royal crown, but of this one advantage: *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, Thou maintainest my lot:* and, on the justest grounds, he immediately adds, *The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Psal. xvi. 5, 6. And it is quite agreeable to reason, that what improves and completes any thing else must be itself more complete and perfect: so that the mind of man can neither be made

* ——— Etenim mortalibus ex quo
Tellus cœpta coli, nunquam sincera bonorum
Sors ulli concessa viro; quem corpus honestat
Dedecorant mores; animus quem pulchrior ornat
Cœpus destituit, &c.

† Cruces nostras vident, unctiones non vident.

‡ Utinam, utinam qui divitias appetunt, cum divitibus deliberarent; certe vota mutarent.

§ Fecisti nos, Domine, propter te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec in te redeat.

|| Habere fragilitatem hominis et securitatem Dei.

happy by earthly enjoyments, which are all far inferior to it in dignity, nor be so in itself. Nay, neither can the angels, though of a more perfect and sublime nature, confer felicity either upon men, or themselves; but both they and we have our happiness lodged in that Eternal Mind, which alone is its own felicity. Nor is it possible for us to find it any where else, but in our union with that Original Wisdom and Goodness, from which we at first took our rise. Away, then, with all the fictitious schemes of felicity proposed by the philosophers, even those of them that were most artfully contrived; for even Aristotle's perfection of virtue, as well as what the Stoics fancied concerning their wise man, are mere fictions. They are nothing but dreams and fancies, that ought to be banished to Utopia. For what they describe is nowhere to be found among men, and if it were, it would not constitute complete felicity. So far, indeed, they are to be commended, that they call in the mind from external enjoyments to itself; but in this they are defective, that when the mind is returned to itself, they carry it no further, nor direct it to ascend, as it were, above itself. They sometimes, it is true, drop such expressions as these, "That there can be no good disposition of the mind without God*;" and that, in order to be happy, the soul must be raised up to divine things: they also tell us, "That the wise man loves God most of all, and for this reason is the most happy man†." But these expressions they drop only at random, and by the bye. O! how much fuller and clearer are the instructions of the Teacher sent down from heaven: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Matt. v. 3.

But because the purest minds of the saints, while they sojourn in this earth, still retain some mixture of earthly dross, and arise not to perfect purity; therefore, they cannot yet enjoy the full vision of God, nor, consequently, that perfect happiness which is inseparably connected with it. *For they see only darkly, and through a glass.* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But with the advantage even of this obscure light, they direct their steps, and go on cheerful and unwearied. The long-wished-for day will at length come, when they will be admitted into the fullest light. That day, which the unhappy men of this world dread as their last, the sons of light wish for, as their nativity into an endless life, and embrace it with the greatest joy when it comes. And this, indeed, seems to me to be the strongest argument for another life and an immortality to come. For since no complete or absolutely perfect happiness is to be found in this life, it must certainly follow, that either there is no such thing to be had any where, or we must live again somewhere after our period here is out. And, O! what *fools* are we, and how *slow of heart to believe*, who think so rarely, and with such coolness, of that blessed country; and that, in this parched and thirsty land, where even those few who are so happy have only some foretastes of that supreme happiness. But when they remove hence, *they shall be abundantly satisfied* (or as the word ought to be translated, *inebriabuntur, intoxicated,*) *O Lord, with the fatness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.* Psal. xxxvi. 9. Thus the divine Psalmist expresses it; and, to be sure, it is

* Nullum posse esse sine Deo bonam mentem.

† "Λεγε ὁ σόφος Θεοφιλέστατος, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εὐδαιμονέστατος.

very surprising, that the great and ancient philosopher Pythagoras, in communicating his thoughts upon the same subject, should happen to fall upon the very same figure; for he used to promise those of his disciples who conducted themselves right in this life, that they should be continually *drunk** in that which is to come.

But what we have said formerly, of the felicity of the life to come, and all that we could say, were we to treat of the same subject over again, is but mere trifling. And yet, it is not disagreeable to hear children speak, even with stammering, about the dignity of their father, and of the riches and magnificence of his inheritance. It is pleasant and decent to speak of our native country, even while we are sojourning in a foreign land. But, for the present, I shall insist no longer on this subject, but, turning the tables, lay before you that dreadful punishment which stands in opposition to this happiness, by presenting you only with a transient view of the future misery of the wicked. And though this is indeed a most unpleasant task, yet nothing but our own carelessness and inattention can render it useless.

Here, first of all, it is to be observed, that as, in this life, there is no perfect felicity; so neither here is there any complete misery. Those whom we look upon as the most wretched in this world, have their sufferings checquered with many intervals of ease. But the misery to come admits of no abatement; it is all of a piece, without admitting any mixture of relief. They are surely mad with their notions, who here talk of the advantages of being or existence, and contend that it is more desirable to be miserable, than not to be at all†. For my part, I am fully satisfied they can never persuade any man of the truth of their assertion; nor even believe it themselves, when they think seriously on the subject. But, not to insist on this, it is certain, that all kind of delights are for ever banished from that eternal and frightful prison. There is there no light, no day, nor sleep, which is the blessing of the night, and, indeed, nothing at all but places full of darkness, precipices, nakedness, and all kinds of horror; no entertainments, merry meetings, nor any sensible pleasure; and to be for ever separated from all such must be no small misery, especially to those who used to pass their time amidst such scenes of mirth and jollity, and imagined themselves in some measure happy therein. And that the remembrance of this may distress them the more, they will be continually haunted with a thought, that will cleave to them like a worm devouring their bowels, and constantly keep them in mind, that, out of a distracted fondness for these fleeting pleasures, which have now flown away, without hope of returning, they have lost those joys that are heavenly and eternal, whereof they will have some knowledge; but what kind of knowledge that will be, and how far extended to enhance their torments, is not ours to determine. But who will attempt to express the excess of their misery, or describe those streams of brimstone, and eternal flames of Divine wrath? Or rather, who will not tremble, I say not in describing them, but even in thinking of them, and be quite overpowered with an idea so shocking?

* Μεθύειν ἀέναον.

† Miserum esse quam non esse.

That I may no further attempt to speak things unutterable*, and to derogate from a grand subject by inadequate expressions†, behold now, my dear youths, if you believe these things, behold, I say, you have now life and death laid before you; choose for yourselves. And that you may not put off a matter of such importance, consider these things, I pray, seriously, and say to yourselves, concerning the vanishing shadows of external things, How long will these enjoyments last? O! how soon will they pass! Even while I am speaking these words, while I am thinking of them, they fly past me. Is any one oppressed with calamities? Let them say cheerfully with a remarkably good man, "Lord, while I am here, kill me, burn me, only spare me there‡." Is there any one among you of weak capacity, unhappy in expressing himself, of an unfavourable aspect, or deformed in body? Let him say with himself, It is a matter of small consequence: I shall soon leave this habitation, and, if I am but good myself, be soon removed to the mansions of the blessed. Let these thoughts prevent his being dejected in mind, or overcome with too much sorrow. If any one is distinguished by a good understanding, or outward beauty, or riches, let him reflect, and seriously consider, how soon all excellencies of this kind will pass away, that he may not be vain, or lifted up with the advantages of fortune. Let it be the chief care and study of you all, to avoid the works of darkness, that so you may escape utter and eternal darkness; and to embrace with open and cheerful hearts that Divine light which hath shone from Heaven, that, when you are divested of these bodies, you may be received into the glorious mansions of that blessed and perfect light.

LECTURE XVIII.

Of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, *and that it is the true way to Happiness.*

I CONFESS, young gentlemen, that whenever I think on the subject, I cannot help wondering at the indolence and madness of mankind. For though we boast that to order our affairs with prudence and discretion, and conduct our lives according to the principles of reason, is the great privilege and ornament of our nature, which distinguishes us from the brute creatures; how few are there, who, in this respect, act like men, who propose to themselves an end, and direct all their actions to the attainment of it! It is very certain, that the greatest part of mankind, with a folly something more than childish, go in quest of painted butterflies, or commonly pursue the birds with stones and clods. And even those who spin out their lives to the utmost extent of old age, for the most part gain little by it, but only this, that they may be called Ἡλίκες πολυχρόνιοι, very aged children; being as ignorant as infants why they came into the world, and what will become of them when they leave it. Of all questions, therefore, none can be more properly proposed to you, who are just upon the verge of

* Τα ἀλαλητα λαλεισθαι.
† Magna modis tenuare parvis.
‡ Domine, hic ure, cæde, modo ibi parcas.

manhood, I mean entering upon a rational life, than this, Whither are you going? What good have you in view? To what end do you propose to live? For hence, possibly, your minds may be excited within you to an earnest desire after that perfect and supreme good; and you may not content yourselves with cool speculations upon this subject, as if it were a logical or philosophical problem, that falls in your way of course, but with that application which is proper in a question concerning a matter of the greatest moment, where it highly concerns us to be well informed, and where the highest rewards and greatest dangers are proposed to our view. And in this hope, I have often addressed myself to you upon the subject of happiness, or the supreme good, at different periods of time; entertaining you, in the intervals, with essays and suitable exhortations upon other subjects, yet, so as to observe a kind of method, and keep up a connexion throughout the whole. I have taken notice of the name and general notion of happiness, the universal desires and wishes whereby men are excited to the pursuit of it, the no less universal because natural ignorance of mankind, and their errors and mistakes in the search of it. Whence it happens, that, as they all run in the wrong road, the faster they advance, the further they depart from it; and like those who ply the oars in a boat, they look one way and move another. And though it seemed almost unnecessary, as facts sufficiently demonstrate the truth of our assertion, yet, by a brief recapitulation, wherein we took notice only of the principal heads and classes of things, we proved that happiness is by no means to be found in this earth, nor in any earthly enjoyments whatsoever. And this is no more than all, even fools as well as wise men, are willing to own: they not only pronounce one another unhappy, but, with regard to this life, all of them in general, and every one for himself in particular, acknowledge, that they are so. And, in this respect, experience fully justifies their relief; so that, if there were no further prospect, I am apt to believe all mankind would agree in that common saying, "That if mankind were apprized beforehand of the nature of this life, and it were left to their own option, none would accept of it*." As the immortality of the soul has a near connexion with this subject, and is a natural consequence from it, we therefore, in the next place, bestowed some time in illustrating that doctrine. In the last place, we advanced some thoughts upon future happiness and misery, so far as is consistent with the weakness of our capacities to comprehend things so little known, and to express such as are in a great measure ineffable.

Having treated of these things according to our measure, it remains that we now inquire about the way which directly leads into that happy city, or to that happiness which is reserved in the heavens. This is a great and important article, comprehending the end and design of our life, as well as the hopes and comforts of it; and is very proper to be first treated of in a catechetical, or, indeed, any methodical system of theology, as appears from reason and precedents: for by this discussion we are immediately introduced into the whole doctrine of true religion. Accordingly, the first question in the generally

* Vitam hanc, si scientibus daretur, neminem accepturum.—Seneca.

received Catechism, which you have in your hands, is, "What is your only consolation in life and in death*?" And the first question of another Catechism, which not long ago was used, particularly in this University, is, "What is the only way to true felicity†?" For the salvation and happiness of mankind, in subordination to the glory of God, (which is, to be sure, the supreme end of all,) is the peculiar and genuine scope of theology; and from it, the definition of this science seems to be most properly drawn. Nor do I imagine that any one is so weak as from hence to conclude, that it ought to be called anthropology, rather than theology: for though it not only treats of the happiness of mankind, but also has this happiness, as has been observed, for its chief end and design; yet, with good reason, and on many accounts, it has obtained this more sublime title. It has God for its author, whom the wisest of men would in vain attempt to find out, but from the revelation He has made of Himself; every such attempt being as vain as it would be to look for the sun in the nighttime, by the light of a candle; for the former, like the latter, can only be seen by His own light. God cannot be known but so far as He reveals Himself: which Sophocles has also admirably well expressed: "You will never," says he, "understand those divine things which the gods have thought proper to conceal, even though you should ransack all nature‡."

Nor has this sacred science God for its author only, but also for its subject and its ultimate end; because the knowledge of Him and His worship comprehends the whole of religion, the beatific vision of Him includes in it the whole of our happiness, and that happiness is at last resolved into the Divine grace and bounty.

I should therefore choose to give this brief and clear definition of theology; viz., That it is a divine doctrine, directing man to real felicity as his chief end, and conducting him to it by the way of true religion. I call it a *doctrine*, because it is not considered here as a habit in the mind, but as a summary of celestial truth. I call it a *divine doctrine*, for all the reasons already mentioned; because, for instance, it is from God, He is the subject of it, and it all terminates in Him at last. I call it a *doctrine directing man*, for I confine my notion of it to that doctrine only which was sent down from heaven for that purpose. What signify, then, those distinctions, which are indeed sounding, but quite tedious and foreign to the purpose, that divide theology into *archetypal* and *ectypal*, and again into the theology of the church militant, and that of the church triumphant? What they call *archetypal theology* is very improperly so named, for it is that perfect knowledge (αυτοσοφια) which God has of Himself. And the theology of the Church triumphant, ought rather to be called θεοψια, the beatific vision of God. The theology in question, is that *day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them which sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.* Luke i. 78, 9. That peace is true happiness, and the way of peace

* Quæ est unica tua consolatio in vita et in morte?

† Quæ est unica ad veram felicitatem via?

‡ Αλλ' ού γάρ ἂν τα θεῖα κρύπτοντος θεοῦ,
Μάθοις ἀν, οὐδ' εἰ πάντ' ἐπιξελθοις σκοπῶν.

is true religion; concerning which I shall offer a few thoughts, and very briefly. First of all, you are to observe, that man is not a lawless creature, but capable of a law, and actually subject to one. This expression conveys no harsh, no dishonourable idea; nay, this subjection is so far from being a burden, that it is the greatest honour. To be capable of a law, is the mark and ornament of an intelligent, rational soul, and that which distinguishes it from the brutes; it evidently supposes a resemblance to God, and an intercourse with Heaven. And to live actually under the direction of religion and the law, is the great honour and ornament of human life, and that distinguishes it from the irregular conduct of the brute creation. For, as the poet expresses it, "One beast devours another, fishes prey upon fishes, and birds upon birds, because they are subject to no law; but mankind lives under a just law, which makes their condition far preferable*."

The brute creatures devour one another without blame, because they have no law; but as Juvenal observes, "Men alone of all earthly creatures, as they derive their reason from the highest heaven, are venerable for their understanding, which renders them capable of inquiring into Divine things, and qualifies them for learning arts, and reducing them to practice†."

And hence it appears, that we were born subjects to religion and an eternal law of nature. For since our blessed Creator has thought proper to endow us with a mind and understanding and powers sufficient for that purpose, to be sure we are bound by an indispensable law, to acknowledge the Primary and Eternal Fountain of our own being and of all created things, to love Him above all other objects, and obey His commands without reserve or exception. So that in this very law of nature is founded a strong obligation upon us to give due obedience to every Divine positive institution which He shall think proper to add for securing the purposes of religion and equity. Wherefore, when our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, transgressed the symbolical command intended as a proof of their obedience, by that very act they most basely broke the primary and great law of nature, which is the foundation of religion, and of every other law whatever.

It is not my intention to speak here of our redemption by the Messias, the only begotten Son of God the Creator: it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that our great Redeemer has indeed delivered us from the chains of sin and death, but has by no means dissolved the bonds of religion, and the everlasting law of nature. Nay, these are, in many respects, strengthened and confirmed by this redemption; and a cheerful submission to them by virtue of

* Ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηρσὶ, καὶ οἰωνοῖς πτερυγωτοῖς
Ἐσθιέμεν ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτοῖς,
Ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην· ἡ πολλὸν ἀρίστη
Γίνεται.

† ——————— Venerabile soli
Sortiti ingenium divinorumque capaces,
Atque exercendis, capiendisque artibus apte
Sensum à cœlesti demissum traximus arce. Juv. Sat. xv.

his Spirit, who is poured out upon us, is a great part of that royal *liberty of the sons of God*, which is secured to us by his means, as by imitating his example, we arrive at the full possession of it, which is reserved for us in the heavenly kingdom. The way, therefore, to happiness, which we are in search of, is *true religion*, and such, in a very remarkable manner, is that of Christianity.

On the truth and excellence of this religion you have a great many learned writers, both ancient and modern. And indeed, it is exceeding plain, from its own internal evidence, that, of all the forms of religion that ever the world saw, there is none more excellent than that of Christianity which we profess, wherein we glory, and in which we think ourselves happy amidst all the troubles of the world: there is none that is more certain and infallible, with regard to its history; more sublime, with regard to its mysteries; more pure and perfect in its precepts; or more venerable for the grave simplicity of its rites and worship; nay, it appears evident, that this religion alone is, in every respect, incomparably preferable to every other. It remains, young gentlemen—What do you think I am going to say? It remains, that we *become true Christians*. I repeat it again, if we will be happy, *let us be Christians*. You will say, "Your wish is easily satisfied, you have your desire, *we are all Christians already*." I wish it may be so! I will not, however, object to any particular person on this head. But every one of you, by a short trial, wherein he will be both witness and judge, may settle this important point within himself. *We are all Christians*. Be it so. But are we *poor in spirit?* Are we humble, meek, and *pure in heart?* Do we *pray without ceasing?* Have we nailed all our carnal appetites and desires to our Saviour's cross, *living no longer to ourselves, but to him that died for us?* This is the true description of a Christian, by the testimony of that gospel which we acknowledge to be Christ's. And those who are entire strangers to these dispositions of mind, know not, to be sure, *the way of peace*. These I earnestly entreat and beseech to rouse themselves, and shake of their indolence and sloth, lest, by indulging the vile desires of the flesh, they lose their souls for ever. But if there are any among you, and, indeed, I believe there are some, who with all their hearts aspire to these Christian virtues, and by their means, to that kingdom, which *can never be shaken, Be strong in the Lord, have your loins girt about with truth, and be sober, and hope to the end*. You will never repent of this holy warfare, where the battle is so short, the victory so certain, and your triumphal crown, and the peace procured by this conflict, will last for ever.

LECTURE XIX.

That Holiness is the only Happiness on this Earth.

THE journey we are engaged in is indeed great, and the way up-hill; but the glorious prize which is set before us, is also great, and our great and valiant Captain, who has long ago ascended up on high, supplies us with strength. If our courage at any time fails us, let us

fix our eyes upon him, and, according to the advice of the Apostle, in his divine Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xii. 2.) *Look unto Jesus*, removing our eyes from all inferior objects, that, being carried up aloft, they may be fixed upon him; which the original words seem to import. Then, being supported by the Spirit of Christ, we shall overcome all those obstacles in our way, that seem most difficult to our indolent and effeminate flesh. And, though the way from the earth towards heaven is by no means easy, yet, even the very difficulty will give us pleasure, when our hearts are thus eagerly engaged and powerfully supported. Even difficulties and hardships are attended with particular pleasure, when they fall in the way of a courageous mind. As the poet expresses it, "Serpents, thirst, and burning sand, are pleasing to virtue. Patience delights in hardships: and honour, when it is dearly purchased, is possessed with the greater satisfaction*."

If what we are told concerning that glorious city, obtain credit with us, we shall cheerfully travel towards it, nor shall we be at all deterred by the difficulties that may be in the way. But, however, as it is true, and more suitable to the weakness of our minds, which are rather apt to be affected with things present and near, than such as are at a great distance, we ought not to pass over in silence, that the way to the happiness reserved in heaven, which leads through this earth, is not only agreeable because of the blessed prospect it opens, and the glorious end to which it conducts, but also, for its own sake, and on account of the innate pleasure to be found in it, far preferable to any other way of life that can be made choice of, or, indeed, imagined. Nay, that we may not, by low expressions, derogate from a matter so grand and so conspicuous, that holiness and true religion which leads directly to the highest felicity, is itself the only happiness, as far as it can be enjoyed on this earth. Whatever naturally tends to the attainment of any other advantage, participates, in some measure, of the nature of that advantage. Now, the way to perfect felicity, if any thing can be so, is a means that, in a very great measure, participates of the nature of its end; nay, it is the beginning of that happiness; it is also to be considered as a part of it, and differs from it, in its completest state, not so much in kind, as in degree. So that in Scripture it has the same names: as, for instance, in that passage of the Evangelist, *This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God.* John xvii. 3. That is, not only the way to eternal life, but also, the beginning and first rudiments of it, seeing the same knowledge, when completed, or the full beatific vision of God, is eternal life in its fulness and perfection. Nor does the divine Apostle make any distinction between these two: *Now*, says he, *we see darkly through a glass; but then we shall see openly*, or, as he expresses it, *face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know as I also am known.* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. That celestial life is called an *inheritance in light*, Col. i. 12; and the heirs of it, even while they are sojourning in this earth, *children of the light*, 1 Thess. v. 5, and, expressly, *light in the*

* ——— Serpens, sitis, ardor arenæ
Dulcia virtuti. Gaudet patientia duris:
Lætius est quoties magno sibi constat honestum. LUCAN, lib. ix. 9.

Lord. You were, says the Apostle, *sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Eph. v. 8. They will be there perfectly holy, and without spot; and even here they are called holy, and, in some respect, they are so. Hence it is, that those who are really and truly good and pious, are, in Scripture, often called blessed, though they are not fully and perfectly so. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.* Psal. cxii. 1. *And blessed are the undefiled in the way.* Psal. cxix. 1.

Even the philosophers give their testimony to this truth; and their sentiments, on this subject, are not altogether to be rejected: for they almost unanimously are agreed, that felicity, so far as it can be enjoyed in this life, consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue. But, as to their assertion, that this virtue is perfect in a perfect life, it is rather expressing what were to be wished, than describing things as they are. They might have said with more truth and justice, that it is imperfect in an imperfect life; which, no doubt, would have satisfied them, if they had known that it was to be made perfect in another place, and another life, that truly deserves the name, and will be complete and perfect. In this, however, we heartily agree with them, that virtue, or, as we rather choose to express it, piety, which is absolutely the sum and substance of all virtues and all wisdom, is the only happiness of this life, so far as it is capable thereof.

And if we seriously consider this subject but a little, we shall find the saying of the wise king Solomon concerning this wisdom, to be unexceptionably true: *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

Doth religion require any thing of us more than that we live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?* Now what, I pray, can be more pleasant or peaceable than these? Temperance is always at leisure, luxury always in a hurry: the latter weakens the body and pollutes the soul, the former is the sanctity, purity, and sound state of both. It is one of Epicurus's fixed maxims, "That life can never be pleasant without virtue*." Vices seize upon men with the violence and rage of furies; but the Christian virtues replenish the breast which they inhabit, with a heavenly peace and abundant joy, and thereby render it like that of an angel. The slaves of pleasure and carnal affections, have within them, even now, an earnest of future torments; so that, in this present life, we may truly apply to them that expression in the Revelations, *They that worship the beast, have no rest day nor night.* "There is perpetual peace with the humble," says the most devout à Kempis; "but the proud and the covetous are never at rest†."

If we speak of charity, which is the root and spring of justice, what a lasting pleasure does it diffuse through the soul! "Envy," as the saying is, "has no days of festivity‡:" it enjoys not even its own advantages, while it is tormented with those it sees in the possession of others. But charity is happy, not only in its own enjoyments, but also in those of others, even as if they were its own: nay, it is then

* 'Ανὺ ἀρετῆς οὐκ εἶναι ἡδέως ζῆν.'

† Jugis pax cum humili, superbus autem et avarus numquam quiescunt.

‡ Invidia festos dies non agit.

most happy in the enjoyment of its own good things, when, by liberality, it makes them the property of others. In short, it is a God-like virtue *. There is nothing more Divine in man, "than to wish well to man, and to do good to as many as one possibly can†." But piety, which worships God in constant prayer, and celebrates Him with the highest praises, raises man above himself, and gives him rank among the angels. And contemplation, which is indeed the most genuine and purest pleasure of the human soul, and the very summit of felicity, is no where so sublime and enriched, as it will be found to be in true religion, where it may expatiate in a system of Divine truths most extensive, clear, and infallibly certain, mysteries that are most profound, and hopes that are the most exalted: and he that can render these subjects familiar to his mind, even on this earth, enjoys a life replete with heavenly pleasure.

I might enlarge greatly on this subject, and add a great many other considerations to those I have already offered; but I shall only further observe, that that sweet virtue of contentment, so effectual for quieting the mind, which philosophy sought for in vain, religion alone has found; and also discovered, that it takes its rise from a firm confidence in the almighty power of Divine Providence. For what is there that can possibly give uneasiness to him who commits himself entirely to that Paternal Goodness and wisdom, which he knows to be infinite, and securely devolves the care of all his concerns upon it?

If any of you object, (what has been observed before,) that we often see good men meet with severe treatment, and also read that *many are the afflictions of the just;* I answer, do you not also read what immediately follows? *But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* Psal. xxxiv. 19. And it would be madness to deny, that this more than compensates the other. But neither are the wicked quite exempted from the misfortunes and calamities of life; and when they fall upon them, they have nothing to support them under such pressures, none to extricate or deliver them.

But a true Christian, encouraged by a good conscience, and depending upon the Divine favour, bears with patience all these evils, by the efforts of generous love and unshaken faith: they all seem light to him; he despises what he suffers, while he waits with patience for the object of his hope. And, indeed, what, either in life or in death, can he be afraid of, whose *life is hid with Christ in God;* and of whom it may be justly said, without exaggeration, "If the world should be crushed and broken to pieces, he would be undaunted, even while the ruins fell upon his head ‡?"

* Ἀρετὴ θεοείκελος.

† Omnibus bene velle, et quam plurimis possit benefacere.

‡ Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ. Hor. lib. iii. Od. 3.

LECTURE XX.

Of our HAPPINESS, *particularly that it lies in* GOD, *who alone can direct us to the true way of attaining to it; that this way He has discovered in the Sacred Scriptures, the Divine authority whereof is asserted and illustrated.*

THESE two expressions, "That there is a beginning, and that there is also an end*," convey matters great in themselves, and which ought to be considered as of vast importance to us. It is absolutely necessary that there should be some one Principle of all things; and by an equal degree of necessity, this Principle must be, of all others, the greatest and the best. It is also necessary, that He who gave being to all things, must have proposed to Himself some end to be attained by the production and disposal of them; but, as the end of the Best of all agents must itself also be the highest and the best, this end can be no other than Himself. And the reasonings of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerning the oath of God, may also be applied to this case: *As He had no greater to swear by,* says the Apostle, *He swore by* HIMSELF. In like manner, as He had no greater or better end to propose, He proposed HIMSELF. *He hath made all things for Himself,* says the author of the Book of Proverbs, *even the wicked for the day of evil.* Prov. xvi. 4. And the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, gives us a lively description of that incomparable circle, the most complete of all figures: *Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* Rom. x. 36.

Now man, the ornament and master-piece of all the visible creation, by extraordinary art, and in a method peculiar to himself, returns to his first Original, and has his Creator, not only for the principle of his being, and of his well-being, but also for his end. Thus, by a wonderful instance of wisdom and goodness, God has so connected His own glory with our happiness, that we cannot properly intend or desire the one, but the other must follow of course, and our felicity is at last resolved into His eternal glory. The other works of God serve to promote His honour; but man, by rational knowledge and will, offers Himself, and all that He has, as a sacrifice to His Creator. From his knowledge of Him, he is induced to love Him; and in consequence of his love, he attains at last to the enjoyment of Him. And it is the wisdom, as well as the happiness of man, to propose to himself, as the scope and ultimate end of his life, that very thing which his exalted Creator had proposed before.

But, that we may proceed gradually in our speculations upon this subject, we must first conclude, that there is a proper end intended for man; that this end is suited to his nature, and perfectly accommodated to all his wants and desires; that so the principal part of this wonderful fabric may not be quite irregular, and labour under a manifest imperfection.

Nor can there be a more important speculation, nor one more

* Ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς, καὶ ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τὶ τέλος.

worthy of man, than that which concerns his own end, and that good which is fully and perfectly suited to his circumstances. Chance of fortune must, of necessity, have a great influence in our life, when we live at random: we must, therefore, if we be wise, or rather that we may be wise, propose to ourselves an end, to which all our actions ought to have a reference, and by which, as a certain fixed star, we are to direct our course. But it is surprising to observe, how much all the wisest men among the heathens were perplexed in their inquiries after this end, and into how many different opinions they were divided about it. Of this, however, we have spoken at greater length in another place.

Now, to be brief, it is necessary, that this good, or end, should be "perfectly suitable, not easily taken away, nay, such as we can by no means be deprived of; and finally, it must consist of such things as have a particular relation to the soul, and not of eternal enjoyments *." Whence "slavish and brutal pleasures †" vain and perishing honours and riches, which only serve to support and promote the former, are, in this inquiry, justly, and without the least hesitation, hissed off the stage by all sound philosophers; who with great unanimity acknowledge, that our felicity consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue. But your favourite philosopher Aristotle, and the Peripatetics who are his followers, seem to doubt whether virtue alone be sufficient for this purpose, and not to be very consistent with themselves. The Stoics, who proceeded with greater courage, and acted more like men, affirmed, that virtue was fully sufficient for this purpose, without the helps and supplements required by the former. And that, while they bestowed such high praises on virtue, they might not seem to have quite forgotten God, they not only said, that virtue was *something Divine*, in which they were joined by Aristotle, but also concluded, that their wise man did all things "with a direct reference to God ‡." It was also a general maxim with the followers of Plato, "That the end of man is, to be, as far as is possible, made like unto God §." And Plato himself, in his second book of Laws, and in his Phædo, asserts, that man's chief good is the *knowledge of the truth:* yet, as this knowledge is not perfect in the present life, he is of opinion, that it can scarcely be said of any man, that he is happy here below; but there is hope to be entertained concerning the dead, provided they are purified before they leave the world. But there are two things particularly, with regard to this question, which our religion and most precious faith, teaches with incomparably greater fulness and evidence, than all the schools and books of the philosophers.

1. That our felicity is not to terminate in ourselves, but in God. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord;* and, *The pure in heart shall see God.* Psal. cxii. 1. Matt. v. 8. "To seek God," says St. Augustine, "is to desire happiness; and to find him, is that happiness ‖."

* Τελειον, και ανταρκες, και δυσαφαιρετον, imo αναφαιρετον, και των περι ψυχης, και ου των εκτος.

† Ανδραποδωδεις και θηριωδεις ηδονας.

‡ Μετ' αναφορας εις τον Θεον.

§ Τελος ανθρωπου ομοιωσις Θεω κατα το δυνατον.

‖ Secutio Dei appetitus beatitatis, consecutio beatitas.

2. That our happiness is not confined within the limits of this short life, nor does it end with it: on the contrary, it is scarce begun in this world, but when the present life comes to a period, then this happiness is completed and becomes eternal. Our life on this earth, therefore, is only so far happy as it has a resemblance to that we shall enjoy in heaven, and becomes, as it were, an earnest of it: that is, when it is employed in pure and sincere piety, in obedience to the will of God, and an ambition to promote His glory, till we arrive at that happy state, where our hunger and thirst shall be abundantly satisfied, and yet our appetites never cloyed.

For it is evident, that man, in this life, becomes so much the more perfect and happy, in proportion as he has his mind and affections more thoroughly conformed to the pattern of that most blessed and perfect life. And this is, indeed, the great ambition of a true Christian; this is his study, which he ceases not to pursue with ardour day and night: nor does he let so much as one day pass without copying some lines of that perfect pattern. And the more he advances in purity of mind, the greater progress he makes in the knowledge and contemplation of Divine things.

But who will instruct us with regard to the means of reaching this blessed mark? Who will shew us how we may attain this conformity to God, and most effectually promote His honour and glory, so that at last we may come to the enjoyment of Him in that endless life, and be for ever satisfied with the beatific vision of Him? What faithful guide shall we find to direct us in this way? Surely he himself must be our Leader: there is no other besides him, who can answer our purpose. It is he alone that acquaints us with His own nature, as far as it is necessary for us to know it; and He alone that directs us to the way wherein he chooses to be worshipped. "God cannot be known but by His own revelation of himself*." When He is pleased to wrap himself up in a cloud, neither man in his original integrity, nay, nor even the angels, can know or investigate His nature or His intentions. We are indeed acquainted in the sacred records, *That the heavens declare the glory of God* (Psal. xix. 1); and this, to be sure, is very true in certain respects; but they do by no means declare the hidden mysteries of the Creator, nor His intentions, and the manner of that worship and service He requires from his reasonable creatures. And therefore the Psalmist, having begun the psalm with the voice and declaration of the heavens, immediately after mentions another light much clearer than the sun himself, and a volume or book more perfect than the language of all the spheres. Nothing is more certain than that the doctrine which leads us to God, must take its rise from Him: for, by no art whatever can the waters be made to rise higher than their fountain. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the purpose I have mentioned, that some revelation concerning God should be made to mankind by Himself: and, accordingly, He did reveal Himself to them from the beginning. And these revelations, the father of lies mimicked by those delusions of his, that were published by the heathen oracles. The Divine Wisdom, in revealing

* Non potest Deus, nisi de Deo, intelligi.

Himself to mankind, has thought proper, at different periods of time, to make use of different methods and ways, or, according to that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*; but at last it seemed good to Him, that this sacred doctrine should be committed to writing, that with the greater certainty and purity it might be handed down to succeeding ages. If we consider His absolute power, it would certainly have been as easy for Him to have preserved this doctrine pure and entire, without committing it to writing: but, for the most part, he has been pleased to make use of means naturally suited and adapted to His purpose, and disposes all things so as effectually to secure His ends, yet, in an easy natural manner, suited to our capacities and conceptions of things.

If any one would prove, that these Books, which we receive as such, are in fact the repositories of this sacred and celestial doctrine, the most proper method he could take, would be first to shew that the sacred history and doctrines contained in them, are true; and then from their own testimony, to conclude them Divine.

For, the truth of our religion being once well established, it is, to be sure, a most just *postulatum*, and such as ought not to be denied to any sect of men, that in this instance, the testimony of the Christian Church should be believed, when it points out the Books wherein the sum and substance of that religion are originally and authentically deposited.

The truth of the sacred history being once granted, the Divinity of the doctrine will naturally follow of course, as the history mentions so many and so great miracles that were wrought in confirmation of the doctrine: those particularly that were performed in proof of the Old Testament by Moses, the servant of God, by whose ministry the Law was given to the Jews; and those that were wrought in confirmation of the New, by Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and author of the Evangelic Law; as, also, those that were wrought by his servants the apostles, and other Christians. And absolutely to deny the force of all these, would be an instance of impudence and obstinacy so great, that the keenest enemies of the Christian name of old, did not venture upon it. But the Scriptures have two great evidences of their Divinity,—their own internal character, and that external testimony.

There are two things which principally prove their external character. 1st. The incomparable sublimity and purity of the doctrine they contain: for in vain will you look for such profound mysteries, and such pure and holy precepts, any where else. 2. The inimitable and evidently Divine majesty of the style, attended, at the same time, with a surprising and wonderful simplicity. Their voice is not the voice of man; but the whole of them, notwithstanding their great extent, sounds something more grand than can be expected from the mouths of mortal men. Nor ought we to pass over that Divine efficacy which the Scriptures have, not only to move the minds of men, but also, by a Divine operation*, to change them into something quite different from what they were before; according to that of Lactantius, "Give me a fierce, cruel, and passionate man, with a few of the words of

* Θεουργῶ μεταμορφώσει.

God I will make him as meek as a lamb, &c.*" And the external testimony already mentioned, has, to be sure, as much weight as any thing of that kind can possibly have. Who would deny to the regular succession of the Catholic Church, the credit of a witness? Who, on the other hand, would claim the authority of a judge and arbitrator? It would be quite silly to ascribe to the Church a decisive power; as if, when a book were first presented to it, or brought out of any place where it had been long concealed, it could immediately pronounce whether that book was of Divine authority or not. The Church is only a witness with regard to those Books we acknowledge; and its testimony extends no further than this, that they were received in the first ages of Christianity, as sacred and Divinely inspired, and, as such, handed down from age to age, to the Church that now is. And he that would venture to discredit this testimony, must have a heart of lead and a face of brass.

There is no occasion to dispute so fiercely about the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost: for I am persuaded that those who talk about it, understand nothing more by it, than that the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of men, that faith whereby they cheerfully and sincerely receive these Books, and the doctrine contained in them, as Divine: because such a faith either includes, in the very notion of it, or at least is necessarily connected with a religious frame of mind, and a sincere disposition to universal obedience. And *he that believeth*, as the apostle John expresseth it, *has this testimony in himself*, though he cannot convey, or transfer it to others, 1 John v. 10. Now, to assert the necessity of such an internal testimony, is nothing more than to say, that whatever evidence the scripture may have in itself, or from other considerations, yet, the Divine faith of this truth must be from above. And he that would deny this, would thereby plainly discover that he was an entire stranger to that faith itself. "The Scripture," says Thomas à Kempis, "must surely be believed and understood, by means of the same Spirit by whom it was at first delivered †." And, as St. Augustine expresses it, "the only effectual teacher is He who has His chair in Heaven, and yet, instructs the hearts of men on this earth ‡." The same Divine Spirit plants faith in the mind, together with the proper intelligence of Divine things, and daily augments and improves these dispositions. This great gift of the Spirit is, therefore, to be sought by fervent and constant prayer; and the Son of God, who is Truth itself, has assured us, that His most bountiful Father will give it to those that ask Him. Aristotle has told us, that "Divine inspiration is to be sought by sacrifices §." And it is no less true, that "the faith and understanding of things revealed by Divine inspiration, are to be sought by prayer ‖." Varro tells us, that he wrote first of human, and then of Divine institutions, because societies of men existed first, and the latter were instituted by them. True religion, on the contrary, instead of being instituted by any city or society on earth,

* Da mihi ferum, &c., *ut supra*.

† Eodem certe spiritu et credenda et intelligenda sacra scriptura, quo tradita est.

‡ Qui cathedram habet in cœlo, corde docet in terris.

§ Τὸ θεόπνευστον τῆις θυσίαις ζητητέον.

‖ Την των θεοπνεύστων πίστιν καὶ σύνεσιν ἰωχαῖς ζητητέον.

hath instituted a city altogether heavenly and Divine, and is itself inspired by God, who is the giver of eternal life to all that worship Him in sincerity*.

It is truly surprising to observe how differently this religion was of old received among men, and what different entertainment it meets with even to this day, though the doctrine has been always the same, though it is still enforced by the same arguments, and has the same difficulties and prejudices to struggle with. When the divine Apostle preached in the Areopagus at Athens, a great many mocked and ridiculed him: *others said, We will hear thee again of this matter: but certain men clave unto Him, and believed.* Acts xvii. 32, 34. And that we may not think this faith, in those who believed, was owing to their uncommon penetration or sagacity on the one hand, or to their weakness and simplicity on the other, of the two mentioned in Scripture, who believed on this occasion, the one was a philosopher, and the other a woman. Now, though, without doubt, human liberty is to be allowed its due weight in this matter, yet, we cannot help acknowledging, that *a certain influence or energy* † seems to discover itself here.

The basis of religion is faith,—just apprehension or *right notions*‡ of God, according to Epictetus. St. Ignatius says, "Faith is the beginning of life, and love the end of it §." And the words of the Apostle are, *He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* So that the giving of a law to man, and the enforcing it with the motives of rewards and punishments, is not inconsistent with the filial and disinterested obedience of a rational creature, even in a state of innocence.

All true and lively faith begets love; and thus, that heavenly light is the vehicle of heat. And as, by this means, true faith has a tendency to the practice of obedience, so, all true obedience depends upon faith, and flows from it. But it also proceeds from love, because faith first produces love, and then works by it. All knowledge of mysteries is vain and of no value, unless it have an influence upon the affections, and thereby, upon the whole conduct of life. The luminaries of heaven are placed on high; but they are so placed, that they may shine, and perform their periods, for the benefit of this earth. Gen. i. 17.

We must first, believe, that God is. This truth is written in capital letters on every page of the sacred books of Scripture; for all things that are therein delivered by God, and concerning him, confirm this, and take it for a primary and undoubted principle. But these sacred books acknowledge another universal evidence of this leading truth, and an evidence quite distinct from theirs, to which they refer all, even the most obstinate unbelievers and those that are entirely ignorant of this celestial doctrine, for full conviction. Rom. i. 20. As it is quite plain, that the testimony of the written word will have little or no influence upon men who have not received the least tincture of Divine Faith, should any person, disputing with them, reason after this man-

* St. Aug. de Civ. Dei., lib. vi. c. 3.
† Θεῖαν τινὰ μόιραν vel ἐνεργειαν.
‡ Θεῖαι ὑπολήψεις.
§ Ἀρχὴ ζωῆς πίστις, τέλος δὲ ἀγαπή.

ner,—There is a God, because this is asserted in the sacred Scriptures, and their testimony must by all means be believed, because they are the word of God;—an argument of this kind, to be sure, would have no other effect than to expose the person who urged it, to the ridicule of atheists and unbelievers; because it evidently begs the question, and runs into a vicious circle. He, therefore, who would bring over such persons to the faith, must reason after a quite different manner. But let him, on the other hand, who once accepts these Books with the submission due to their real dignity and Divine authenticity, receive light and edification from them on every article of faith, and with regard to the whole system of religion in general. Let him, also, in congratulation to their exalted Author, cry out, *With Thee, O Lord, is the fountain of life: and in Thy light we shall see light.* Psal. xxvi. 9. And let him that desires to be, not only a nominal proficient in theology, but *Φιλόθεος καὶ Θεοδίδακτος*—a real *lover of God*, and willing to be taught by Him, resolve within himself, above all things, to make this sacred volume his constant study, mixing his reading with frequent and fervent prayer: for if this be omitted, his labour will be altogether in vain, supposing him to be ever so well versed, not only in these books, but also to have all the advantages that can be had from the knowledge of languages, and the assistance of commentators and interpreters. Different men have different views in reading this Book. As, in the same field, the ox looks for grass, the hound for a hare, and the stork for a lizard, some, fond of critical remarks, pick up nothing but little stones and shells; others run in pursuit of sublime mysteries, giving themselves but very little trouble about the precepts and instructions that are clear and evident, and these plunge themselves into a pit that has no bottom. But the genuine disciples of this true wisdom, are those who make it their daily employment, to purify their hearts by the water of those fountains, and reduce their whole lives to a conformity with this heavenly doctrine. They desire not to know these things, only that they may have the reputation of knowledge, or to be distinguished in the world; but that their souls may be healed, and their steps directed, so that they may be led through the paths of righteousness, to the glorious felicity which is set before them.

The sum of all is, that our felicity lies solely and entirely in that blessed God, who is also the fountain and source of our being; that the only means of our union with Him, is true religion; and this, again, consists in our entertaining just notions of God, worshipping Him acceptably, and endeavouring after a constant and unwearied obedience to all his commands, according to that most pure and perfect rule laid down in those Divine Books which we profess to receive as such. Let us, therefore, have constantly fixed in our minds these words of the Psalmist, *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the way of the Lord. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently. O! that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes.* Psal. cxix. 1, 4, 5.

LECTURE XXI.

Of the Divine Attributes.

Of all the maxims that are naturally written on the heart of man, there is none more certain or more universally known, than that God is; concerning which I have given a dissertation some time ago. But of all the secrets and hidden things of nature, which have been the subject of human study and inquiry, there is nothing, by a prodigious odds, so difficult or unsearchable, as to know what he is. The saying of St. Augustine concerning Time, is well known in the schools: with how much greater truth might it be said of Him, who is more ancient than time, and "who bade time flow from the beginning *," That *He hath made darkness His hiding-place, and amidst that darkness dwells in light inaccessible.* Psal. xviii. 11. Which, to our eyes, is to be sure more dark than darkness itself! "O the Divine darkness!" says a great man †; and another, most acutely, "If you divide or cut asunder this darkness, who will shine forth ‡?" When, therefore, we are to speak of Him, let us always call to remembrance the admonition which bids us speak *with reverence and fear.* For what can we say that is worthy of Him, since man, when he speaks of God, is but a blind person describing light? Yet, blind as we are, there is one thing we may, with great truth, say of that glorious light, and let us frequently repeat it: O when will that blessed day shine forth, which shall deliver the soul from those thick integuments of flesh, that like scales on the eye, obstruct its sight, and shall introduce it into a more full and open view of that primitive, eternal Light! Perhaps, the properest answer we could give to the question, What is God? would be to observe a most profound silence; or, if we should think proper to give any answer, it ought to be something next to this absolute silence; viz. God is; which gives us a higher and better idea of Him, than any thing we can either express or conceive.

Theological writers mention three methods whereby men come to some kind of knowledge of God themselves, and communicate that knowledge to others, viz., the way of *negation*, the way of *causation*, and the way of *eminence*. Yet, the very terms that are used to express these ways, shew what a faint knowledge of the Invisible Being is to be attained by them; so that the two last may be justly reduced to the first, and all our knowledge of this kind called *negative*. For, to pretend to give any explanation of the Divine Essence, as distinct from what we call His attributes, would be a refinement so absurd, that under the appearance of more accurate knowledge, it would betray our ignorance the more. And so unaccountable would it be to attempt any such thing, with regard to the unsearchable majesty of God, that possibly the most towering and exalted genius on earth ought frankly to acknowledge, that we know neither our own essence,

* —— Qui tempus ab ævo
Ire jubet. Boeth. Cons. Phil., lib. iii. met. 9.

† Ω τὸ θεῖον σκότος.

‡ Ἂν τὸ σκότος τέμνῃ, τίς ἀναστρέψεται.

nor that of any other creature, even the meanest and most contemptible. Though, in the schools they distinguish the Divine attributes or excellencies, and that by no means improperly, into communicable and incommunicable; yet we ought so to guard this distinction, as always to remember that those which are called communicable, when applied to God, are not only to be understood in a manner incommunicable and quite peculiar to Himself, but also, that in Him they are, in reality, infinitely different from those virtues, or rather, in a matter where the disparity of the subjects is so very great, those shadows of virtues that go under the same name either in men or angels. For it is not only true, that all things, in the Infinite and Eternal Being, are infinite and external, but they are also, though in a manner quite inexpressible, HIMSELF. He is good without quality, great without quantity, &c. He is good in such a sense as to be called by the Evangelist, the Only Good Being. Matt. xix. 17. He is also the Only Wise Being: *To the Only Wise God*, saith the Apostle. 1 Tim. i. 17. And the same Apostle tells us, in another place, That *He only hath immortality;* 1 Tim. vi. 16, that is, from His own nature, and not from the will or disposition of another. "If we are considered as joined to, or united with God," says an ancient writer of great note, "we have a being, we live, and in some sort are wise; but, if we are compared with God, we have no wisdom at all, nor do we live, or so much as have any existence*." All other things were by Him brought out of nothing, in consequence of a free act of His will, by means of His infinite power; so that they may be justly called mere contingencies, and he is the only necessarily existent Being. Nay, He is the only *really existent Being;* τὸ ὄντως ὄν; or as Plotinus expresses, τὸ ὑπερόντως ὄν. Thus, also, the Septuagint speaks of Him as the only existent Being, ὁ ὤν. And so also does the heathen poet†. This is likewise implied in the exalted name Jehovah, which expresses His being, and that He has it from Himself; but what that being is, or wherein its essence, so to speak, consists, it does not say; nor, if it did, could we at all conceive it. Nay, so far is that name from discovering what His being is, that it plainly insinuates that His existence is hid and covered with a veil. *I am who I am:* or, *I am what I am.* As if He had said, I myself know what I am, but you neither know nor can know it: and if I should declare wherein my being consists, you could not conceive it. He has, however, manifested in His works and in His word, what it is our interest to know, that He is *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth.*

We call him a most pure Spirit, and mean to say, that He is of a nature entirely incorporeal; yet, this word, in the Greek, and Hebrew, and all other languages, according to its primitive and natural signification, conveys no other idea than that of a *gentle gale*, or wind, which every one knows to be a body, though rarefied to a very great degree: so that, when we speak of that Infinite Purity, all words fail us; and even when we think of it, all the refinements of the acutest

* Deo si conjungimur, sumus, vivimus, sapimus; Deo si comparamur, nec sapimus omnino, nec vivimus, imo nec sumus. Greg. Mag. Mor.

† Οὐδὲ τὶς ἰσθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγαλου βασιλῆος.

understanding are quite at a stand, and become entirely useless. It is, in every respect, as necessary to acknowledge his eternity, as His being; provided that, when we mention the term, God, we mean by it the First Being, supposing that expression to include also His Self-existence. This idea of a First and Eternal Being, is again inseparably connected with an infinite degree of all possible perfection, together with immutability, and absolute perseverance therein. But all these are treated of, at great length, in Theological books, whereof you have a very large collection.

In like manner, if we suppose God to be the First of all Beings, we must unavoidably therefrom conclude His unity. As to the ineffable Trinity subsisting in this Unity, a mystery discovered only by the sacred Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, where it is more clearly revealed than in the Old, let others boldly pry into it, if they please, while we receive it with an humble faith, and think it sufficient for us to admire and adore.

The other Attributes that used to be mentioned on this subject, may be supposed to be perfectly comprehended under the following three, viz., *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness*: for *holiness*, *justice*, *mercy*, *infinite bounty*, &c., may be, with great propriety, ranked under the general term of *goodness*.

But rather than insist upon metaphysical speculations, let us, while we walk daily in these pleasant fields, be constantly culling fresh and never-fading flowers. "When the Psalmist cries out, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and of His greatness there is no end*, he wanted to shew," saith St. Augustine, "how great He is. But how can this be done? Though he repeated, *Great, Great*, the whole day, it would have been to little purpose, for he must have ended at last, because the day would have ended; but his greatness was before the beginning of days, and will reach beyond the end of time*." The poet expresses himself admirably well: "I will praise thee, O blessed God, with my voice, I will praise thee, also, with silence. For thou, O inexpressible Father, who canst never be known, understandest the silence of the mind, as well as any words or expressions†."

* Volebat dicere quam magnus sit, sed hoc qui fieri potest? Etsi tota die magnum diceret, parum esset, finiret enim aliquando, quia, finiretur dies, magnitudo autem illius anta dies, et ultra dies.

† Τμνῶ σι μάκαρ,
Καὶ δια φωνᾶς.
Τμνῶ σι μάκαρ,
Καὶ δια σιγᾶς.
Οσα γαρ φωνᾶς
Τόσα και σιγᾶς,
Λιτις νοερᾶς.
Πάτερ ἄγνωστε,
Πάτερ ἄῤῥητε. Syn. Hymno. 4to.

LECTURE XXII.

How to regulate Life according to the Rules of RELIGION.

I HAVE now, at different times, addressed myself to you upon several subjects of great importance and of the utmost necessity; though what I have hitherto said, was only designed as a preface or introduction to what I further proposed. But to attempt to prosecute this design at the very end of the year, would be quite improper, and to little or no purpose: I shall, therefore, altogether forbear entering upon it, and for this time, lay before you a few advices, which may be useful, not only in order to employ to greater advantage the months of vacation that are now at hand, but also the better to regulate your whole lives.

And my first advice shall be, *to avoid too much sleep*, which wastes the morning hours, that are most proper for study, as well as for the exercises of religion, and stupefies and enervates the strength of body and mind. I remember that the famous abbot of Clairvaux, (St. Bernard,) when he found the friars sleeping immoderately, used to say, "That they slept like the secular clergy*." And though we do not admit of the severe rules to which the monks subjected themselves, we must at least allow, that the measure and degree of sleep and other bodily refreshments, suitable for a young man devoted to study and devotion, is very far different from that excess in which the common sort of mankind indulge themselves.

Another advice, which is akin to, and nearly connected with, the former, shall be, to observe *temperance in eating and drinking*. For moderation in sleeping, generally follows sobriety in eating and other sensual gratifications; but that thick cloud of vapours that arises from a full stomach, must of necessity overwhelm all the animal spirits, and keep them long locked up in an indolent, inactive state. Therefore, the Greeks, not without reason, express these two duties, *to be sober, and to be watchful*, indifferently by the same term. And the Apostle Peter, that he might make his connexion more evident, uses, indeed, two words for this purpose; but exhorts to these duties as closely connected together, or rather, as if they were, in some respect, but one, *Be sober, be vigilant*, 1 Pet. v. 8. And in the same Epistle, having substituted another word for sobriety, he expresses watchfulness by the same word he had put for sobriety in the other place, [Νήψατε.] *Be sober* and *watch*. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Both these dispositions are so applied to the mind, as to include a sober and watchful state of the body and senses; as this is exceeding useful, nay, quite necessary, in order to a correspondent frame of the mind, and that disposition both of body and mind, not only subservient, but also necessary to piety and constancy in prayer: *Be sober and watch unto prayer*. 1 Pet. iv. 7.

When the body is reduced to its lightest and most active state, still, as it is corruptible, it is, to be sure, a burden to the mind. How

* Secularitер dormire.

much more must it be so, when it is depressed with an immoderate load of meat and drink, and, in consequence of this, of sleep! Nor can the mind rouse itself, or use the wings of contemplation and prayer with freedom, when it is overpowered with so heavy a load: nay, neither can it make any remarkable progress in the study of human literature, but will move slowly and embarrassed, be at a stand, like a wheel-carriage in deep clay. The Greeks very justly expressed the virtue we are now recommending, by the term Σωφροσύνη, it being as your favourite philosopher [Aristotle] observes in his Ethics, the great preservative of the mind. He is certainly a very great enemy to his own understanding, who lives high and indulges himself in luxury. "A fat belly is seldom accompanied with any acute understanding*." Nor is it my intention in this, only to warn you against drunkenness and luxury; I would willingly hope that such an advice would be superfluous to you: but, in this conflict, I would willingly carry you to such a pitch of victory, that, at your ordinary and least delicious meals, you would always stop some degrees within the bounds to which your appetite would carry you. Consider that, as Cato said, "the belly has no ears†;" but it has a mouth, into which a bridle must be put, and therefore I address not myself to it, but to the directing mind that is set over it, which, for that reason, ought to govern the body with all its senses, and curb them at its pleasure. St. Bernard's words are admirable to this purpose. "A prudent mind, devoted to God, ought so to act in its body, as the master of a family in his own house. He ought not to suffer his flesh to be, as Solomon expresses it, like a brawling woman, nor any carnal appetite to act like a rebellious servant; but to inure them to obedience and patience. He must not have his senses for his guides, but bring them into subjection and subserviency to reason and religion. He must, by all means, have his house and family so ordered and well disciplined, that he can say to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to his servant the body, Do this, and it doeth what it is bid without murmuring. The body must also be treated with a little hardship, that it may not be disobedient to the mind‡." For he, saith Solomon, *that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become a (rebellious) son at last.* Prov. xxix. 21. This is what I would have you aspire to, a conquest over your flesh, and all its lusts; for they carry on a deadly war against your souls, and their desires are then most to be resisted, when they flatter most. What an unhappy and dishonourable inversion of nature it is, when the flesh commands, and the mind is in subjec-

* Παχεῖα γαστὴρ λεπτὸν οὐ τίκτει νόον.

† Ventrem non habere aures.

‡ Sic prudens et Deo decatus animus habere se debet in corpore suo, sicut pater familias in domo sua. Non habeat, sicut Solomon dicit, mulierem litigiosam carnem suam, nec ullum appetitum carnis ut servum rebellem, sed ad obedientiam et patientiam assuefactum. Habeat sensus suos non duces, sed rationi et religioni servientes et sequaces; habeat omnem omnino domum vel familiam suam sic ordinatam, et disciplinæ subditam, ut dicat huic vade, et vadat, et alii, Veni, et veniat, et servo corpori, Facito hoc, et sine murmure fiat quod jubetur, et paulo certe durius tractandum est corpus, ne animo male pareat.

tion; when the flesh, which is vile, gross, earthly, and soon to be the food of worms, governs the soul, that is the breath of God!

Another thing I would have you beware of, is, *immoderate speech*. The evils of the tongue are many: but the shortest way to find a way for them all, is to study silence, and avoid, as the poet expresses it, "excessive prating, and a vast desire of speaking*."

He is a perfect man, as the Apostle James expresses it, *who offends not in word*. Jam. iii. 2. And, therefore, doubtless, he that speaks least, offends in this respect more rarely. But, *in the multitude of words*, as the wise man observes, *there wants not sin*. Prov. x. 19. To speak much, and also to the purpose, seldom falls to the share of one man†. Now, that we may avoid loquacity, we must love solitude, and render it familiar, that so every one may have an opportunity to speak much to himself, and little to other people. "We must, to be sure," says à Kempis, "be in charity with all men; but it is not expedient to be familiar with every one‡." General and indiscriminate conversation with every one we meet, is a mean and silly thing. Even when we promise ourselves comfort and satisfaction from free conversation, we often return from such interviews with uneasiness; or, at least, have spoken and heard such things as, upon serious reflection, may justly give us concern.

But, if we would secure our tongues and senses, or keep safe our hearts and all the issues of life, we must be frequent at prayer, in the morning, at noon, and at night, or oftener throughout the day, and continually walk as in the presence of God; always remembering that He observes, not only our words and actions, but also takes notice of our most secret thoughts. This is the sum and substance of true piety; for he who is always sensible that that pure and all-seeing Eye is continually upon him, will never venture to sin with set purpose, or full consent of mind. This sense of the Divine presence, would certainly make our life on this earth like that of the angels; for, according to our Lord's expression, it is their peculiar advantage, *continually to behold the face of our Father who is in heaven*. By this means, Joseph escaped the snares laid for him by his imperious mistress; and, as if he had thrown water upon it, extinguished that fiery dart with this seasonable reflection, *Shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God*. Gen. xxxix. 9. He might have escaped the eyes of men, but he stood in awe of that Invisible Eye from which nothing can be hid. We read of a good man of old, who got the better of a temptation of the same kind, by the same serious consideration; for, being carried from one chamber to another by the woman that tempted him, he still demanded a place of greater secrecy, till having brought him to the most retired place of the whole house, Here, said she, no person will find us out, no eye can see us. To this he answered, Will no eye see? Will not that of God perceive us? By which saying, he himself escaped the snare, and, by the influence of Divine grace, brought the sinful woman to repentance. But now,

* Improba garrulitas, studiumque immane loquendi.

† Χωρὶς τὸ τ' εἶπειν πολλὰ καὶ τὰ κάιρια.

‡ Charitas certe habenda est erga omnes, sed familiaritas non expedit.

Let us pray.

PRAISE waits for Thee, O Lord, in Zion; and to be employed in paying Thee that tribute, is a becoming and pleasant exercise. It is due to Thee from all the works of Thy hands, but particularly proper from Thy saints and celestial spirits. Elevate, O Lord, our minds, that they may not grovel on the earth, and plunge themselves in the mire; but, being carried upwards, may taste the pleasures of Thy house, that exalted house of Thine, the inhabitants whereof are continually singing Thy praises. Their praises add nothing to Thee; but they themselves are perfectly happy therein, while they behold Thy boundless goodness without any veil, admire Thy uncreated beauty, and celebrate the praises thereof throughout all ages. Grant us, that we may walk in the paths of holiness, and, according to our measure, exalt Thy name even on this earth, until we also be translated into the glorious assembly of those who serve Thee in Thy higher house.

Remember Thy goodness and Thy covenant to Thy Church militant upon this earth, and exposed to dangers amidst so many enemies; yet we believe that, notwithstanding all these dangers, it will be safe at last: it may be distressed, and plunged in the waters, but it cannot be quite overwhelmed, or finally perish. Pour out Thy blessing upon this our Nation, our City, and University. We depend upon Thee, O Father, without whose hand we should not have been, and without whose favour we can never be happy. Inspire our hearts with gladness, Thou who alone art the fountain of solid, pure, and permanent joy; and lead us, by the paths of righteousness and grace, to the rest and light of glory, for the sake of Thy Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE XXIII.

Of PURITY *of* LIFE.

IN every act of religious worship, what a great advantage would it be, to remember that saying of our great Master, which nobody is altogether ignorant of, and yet scarce any know as they ought, "That God, whom *we worship*, is a spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and in truth*." He is a spirit, a most pure spirit, and the father of spirits: he is truth, primitive truth, and the most pure fountain of all truth: "But we all have erred in heart†." We are indeed spirits, but spirits immersed in flesh; nay, as it were, converted into flesh, and, the light of truth being extinguished within us, quite involved in the darkness of error: and what still sets us in greater opposition to the truth, every thing about us is false and delusive; "There is no soundness‡." How improper, therefore, are we, who are *deceitful* and *carnal*§, to worship that Spirit of supreme truth! Though we pray, and fast often, yet all our sacrifices, as they are polluted by the impure hands wherewith we offer them, must be offensive, and unacceptable to God: and the more they are multiplied, the more

* John iv. 24.
† Ἡμεῖς δὲ πάλλοι καρδία πλανώμενοι.
‡ Οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς.
§ Σάρκικοι καὶ ψυσται.

the pure and spotless Deity must complain of them, as the grievance is thereby enhanced. Thus, by his prophet, he complained of his people of old: "Your new moons, saith he, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them: therefore, when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, and, as it were, turn my back upon you with disdain: but if you will wash you, and make you clean, then come and let us reason together*:" as if he had said, then let us converse together, and if there be any difference between us, let us talk over the matter, and settle it in a friendly manner, that our complaints may be turned into mutual embraces, and all your sins being freely and fully forgiven, you may be restored to perfect innocence: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be redder than crimson, they shall be whiter than wool; wash yourselves, and I will also wash you, and most completely wipe away all your stains."

But that we may be the better provided for this useful, and altogether necessary exercise of cleansing our hearts and ways, and apply to it with the greater vigour, let us dwell a little upon that sacred expression in the Psalms, "Wherewith shall a young man purify his way?" The answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word†." In this question, several things offer themselves to our observation.

1. That, *without controversy* ‡, purity of life, or conversation, is a most beautiful and desirable attainment, and that it must, by all means, begin at the very fountain, that is, the heart; whence, as Solomon observes, "proceed the issues of life." In the beginning of the Psalm, they are pronounced blessed, "Who are pure, or undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." And, in another place, "Truly God is good to Israel," says the Psalmist, "even to such as are of a clean heart§." And the words of our Saviour to this purpose, are, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God‖." Nor is the true and genuine beauty of the soul any thing distinct from this purity and sanctity; this is the true image of its great Creator; that golden crown, which most unhappily dropt off the head of man, when he fell: so that, with the greatest justice, we may lament and say, "Wo unto us that we have sinned." And it is the general design and intention of all religion, all its mysteries, and all its precepts, that this crown may be again restored, at least, to some part of the human race, and this image again stamped upon them; which image, when fully completed, and for ever confirmed, will certainly constitute a great part of that happiness, we now hope for, and aspire after. Then, we trust, we shall attain to a more full conformity and resemblance to our beloved Head. And, even in this wayfaring state, the more deeply and thoroughly our souls are tinctured with the divine flame of charity, joined with this beautiful purity, the more we resemble Him who is *white and ruddy, and fairer than the sons of men.* The Father of mercies has made choice of us, that we may be holy; the Son of God,

* Isaiah i. 14—16, 18.
‡ Ὁμολογουμένως.
† Psalm cxix. 9.
§ Psalm lxxiii. 1.
‖ Matt. v. 8.

blessed for ever, has once for all shed his blood upon earth, in order to purify us, and daily pours out his Spirit from heaven upon us, for the same purpose.

But to consider the matter, as it is in itself, where is the person that does not, even by the force of natural instinct, disdain filth and nastiness, or at least prefer to it purity and neatness of body? Now, as the soul greatly excels the body, so much the more desirable is it, that it should be found in a state of beauty and purity. In like manner, were we to travel a journey, who would not prefer a plain and clean way to one that were rough and dirty? But the way of life, which is not the case in other matters, will be altogether such as you would have it or choose to make it. With God's assistance, and the influence of His grace, a good man is at pains to purify his own way; but men of an impure and beastly disposition, who delight to wallow in the mire, may always easily obtain their sordid wish. But I hope that you, disdaining such a brutish indignity, will, in preference to every thing else, give your most serious attention to this inquiry, by what means even young men and boys may purify their way, and, avoiding the dirty paths of the common sort of mankind, walk in such as are more pleasant and agreeable.

2. Observe, that purity is not such an easy matter that it may fall by chance in the way of those that are not in quest of it, but a work of great art and industry. Hence you may also learn, that the way, even of young men or boys *, stands very much in need of this careful attention. It is indeed true, that, in some respect, the reformation of youth is easier and sooner accomplished, in that they are not accustomed to shameful and wicked ways, nor confirmed in sinful habits; but there are other regards wherein it is more difficult to reduce that period of life to purity, particularly as it is more strongly impressed with the outward objects that surround it, and easily disposed to imbibe the very worst: the examples and incitements to vice beset youth in greater abundance, and those of that age are more apt to fall in with them.

But whatever may be said of the easiness or difficulty of reforming youth and childhood, it is evident from this question, which, without doubt, is proposed with wisdom and seriousness, that this matter is within the verge of possibility, and of the number of such as are fit to be attempted. Youth is not so headstrong, nor childhood so foolish, but by proper means they can be bent and formed to virtue and piety. Notwithstanding the irregular desires and forwardness of youth, and that madness whereby they are hurried to forbidden enjoyments, there are words and expressions that can soothe this impetuosity, even such, that by them youth can tame and compose itself, *By attending to itself and its ways, according to Thy word:* that matchless word, which contains all those particular words and expressions, not only that are proper to purify and quiet all the motions and affections of the soul, but also, by a certain Divine power, are wonderfully efficacious for that purpose. And what was said of old concerning Sparta and its discipline, may be, with much greater truth, asserted of the Divine

* The Hebrew word used in the text, properly signifies a boy.

Law and true religion, *viz.*, that it had a surprising power to *tame and subdue mankind**. And this leads us directly to the answer of the question in the text: *By attending thereto according to Thy word.*

This is not, therefore, to be done according to our philosophy, but *according to Thy word*, O Eternal Light, Truth, and Purity! The philosophy of the heathens, it is true, contains some moral instructions and precepts that are by no means despicable; but this is only so far as they are agreeable to the word of God and the Divine Law, though the philosophers themselves knew nothing of it. But the only perfect system of moral philosophy, that ought to be universally received, is the doctrine of Christianity. This the ancient fathers of the primitive Church have asserted, and fully proved, to the honour of our religion. But those who spend their lives in the study of philosophy, can neither reform themselves nor others, if nature be but a little obstinate; and their wisdom, when it does its utmost, rather conceals vices, than eradicates them; but the Divine precepts make so great a change upon the man, and, subduing his old habits, so reform him, that you would not know him to be the same. If any of you, then, aspire to this purity of mind and way, you must, with all possible care, conform yourself, and every thing about you, to the instructions and precepts of this Divine word. Nor think this a hard saying; for the study of purity has nothing in it that is unpleasant or disagreeable, unless you think it a grievance to become like unto God.

Consider now, young men, nay, you who, without offence, will suffer yourselves to be called boys; consider, I say, wherein consists that true wisdom which deserves to be pursued with the most earnest study and application, and whereby, if you will, you may far exceed those that are your superiors in years. Be ambitious to attain the advantage mentioned in the text, and consequently the condition upon which it depends, for they are inseparably connected together. Reconcile your minds to a strict attention to your ways, according to the Divine word; and by this means, (which is a very rare attainment,) you will reconcile youth, and even childhood, to the purity here recommended. Account the Divine word and precepts preferable to your daily food; yea, let them be dearer to you than your eyes, and even than life itself.

LECTURE XXIV.

Before the Communion.

It is the advice of the wise man, "Dwell at home," or, with yourself; and though there are very few that do this, yet it is surprising that the greatest part of mankind cannot be prevailed upon, at least to visit themselves sometimes; but, according to the saying of the wise Solomon, *The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth.* It is the peculiar property of the human mind, and its signal privilege, to reflect upon itself; yet we, foolishly neglecting this most valuable

* Δαμασιμβροτον.

gift conferred upon us by our Creator, and the great ornament of our nature, spend our lives in a brutish thoughtlessness. Were a man, not only to turn in upon himself, carefully to search and examine his own heart, and daily endeavour to improve it more and more in purity, but also to excite others with whom he conversed, to this laudable practice, by seasonable advice and affecting exhortations, he would certainly think himself very happy in these exercises. Now, though this expedient is never unseasonable, yet, it will be particularly proper on such an occasion as this, to try it upon yourselves; as you are not ignorant, that it is the great apostolical rule with respect to all who are called to celebrate the Divine mysteries, *Let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

I do not here intend a full explication of this mystery, but only to put you in mind, that, in order to a saving use and participation thereof, a twofold judgment must of necessity be formed; the first with respect to our own souls, and the other, to that of the Lord's body. These the Apostle considers as closely connected together, and therefore expresses both by the same word. The trial we are to make of ourselves, is indeed expressed by the word δοκιμάζειν, which signifies to *prove*, or to *try;* but immediately after, he expresses it by judging ourselves, [Εἰ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν,] *For if we would judge ourselves*, &c. Whereas, in the preceding verses, he had mentioned the other judgment to be formed, and expressed it by the same word [διακρίνειν,] which signifies to *judge* or *discern:* [Μὴ διακρίνων το σωμα του Κυρίου,] *Not discerning the Lord's body.* And this is that which renders a vast many unworthy of so great an honour; they approach this heavenly feast without forming a right judgment either of themselves or of it. But, that we form a judgment of ourselves, it is necessary that we first bring ourselves to an impartial trial: and, to be sure, I should much rather advise you to this inward self-examination, and heartily wish I could persuade you to it, than that you should content yourselves with a lifeless trial of your memory, by repeating compositions on this subject.

Consider with yourselves, I pray, and think seriously, what madness, what unaccountable folly it is, to trifle with the majesty of the Most High God, and to offer to Infinite Wisdom the sacrifices of distraction and folly? Shall we who are but insignificant worms, thus *provoke the Almighty King to jealousy*, as if he were *stronger than He*, and of purpose, run our heads, as it were, against that Power, the slightest touch whereof would crush us to dust? Do we not know, that the same God who is an enlivening and saving light to all that worship with humble piety, is, nevertheless, *a consuming fire* to all the impious and profane, who pollute his sacrifices with impure hearts and unclean hands? And that those especially, who have been employed in His Church, and in the Divine offices, yet have not experienced His influence as a pure and shining light, will unavoidably feel Him as a flaming fire? Let His saints rejoice and exult before God, for this He not only allows, but even commands: yet, let even those of them who have made the greatest advances in holiness, remember, that this holy and spiritual joy is to be joined with holy fear and

trembling: nay, the greater progress they have made in holiness, the more deeply will they feel this impressed upon their minds, so that they can by no means forget it, "The great Eye is over us, let us be afraid*." Great is our God, and holy: even the angels worship Him. Let His saints approach Him, but with humility and fear; but, as for the slothful and those that are immersed in guilt, who securely and with pleasure indulge themselves in impure affections, let them not dare to come near. Yet if there are any, let their guilt and pollution be ever so great, who find arising within them a hearty aversion to their own impurity, and an earnest desire after holiness; behold, there is opened for you a living and pure fountain, most effectual for cleansing and washing away all sorts of stains, as well as for refreshing languishing and thirsty souls. And He who is the living and never-failing fountain of purity and grace, encourages, calls, and exhorts you to come to Him. *Come unto me, all ye that are athirst*, &c. And again, *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will by no means reject or cast out.* John vi. 37.

Ask yourselves, therefore, what you would be at, and with what dispositions you come to this most Sacred Table. Say, Whither art thou going, and what seekest thou, O my soul? For it would be an instance of the most extravagant sloth and folly, to set about a matter of so great importance, and so serious, without any end, without the prospect of any advantage, and therefore without any serious turn of mind, or as one doing nothing. Yet this is the case of vast numbers that meet together in Divine assemblies, and at this holy sacrament. Is it any wonder, that those should find nothing, who absolutely have nothing in view; and that he who is bound for no harbour, should meet with no favourable wind? They give themselves up to the torrent of custom, and steer not their course to any particular port, but fluctuate and know not whither they are carried; or, if they are alarmed with any sting of conscience, it is only a kind of inconsiderate and irregular motion, and reaches no farther than the exterior surface of sacred institutions. But as for you who, according to the expression of the angels, *seek Jesus, fear not;* you will certainly find him, and in him all things. *For it hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulness shall dwell.* Col. i. 10. So that in him there is no vacuity, and without him, nothing else but emptiness and vanity. Let us embrace him, therefore, with our whole hearts, and on him alone let us depend and rely.

Let his death, which we commemorate by this mystery, extinguish in us all worldly affections. May we feel his Divine power working us into a conformity to his sacred image; and having our strength, as it were, renewed by his means, let us travel towards our heavenly country, constantly following him with a resolute and accelerated pace.

The concern of purifying the heart in good earnest, taking proper measures for conforming the life to the rules of the Gospel, is equally incumbent upon all. For this is the great and true design of all

* Ὄμμα μέγα τερμιόωμεν.

Divine worship, and of all religious institutions; though the greater part of mankind satisfy themselves with the outward surface of them, and therefore catch nothing but shadows in religion itself, as well as in the other concerns of life. We have public prayers and solemn sacraments: yet, if amidst all these, one should look for the true and lively characters of Christian faith, or in the vast numbers that attend these institutions, he should search for those that, in the course of their lives, approve themselves the true followers of their great Master, he would find reason to compare them to a "few persons swimming at a great distance from one another, in a vast ocean*."

It has been observed long ago by one, "that in Rome itself he had found nothing of Rome†;" which with too great truth, might be applied to religion, about which we make so great a bustle at present; there is scarcely any thing at all of religion in it, unless we imagine that religion consists of words, as a grove does of trees. For, if we suppose it lies in the mortification of sin, unfeigned humility, brotherly charity, and a noble contempt of the world and the flesh, whither has it gone, and left us? As for you, young gentlemen, if you would apply to this matter in good earnest, you must, of necessity, bestow some time and pains upon it, and not fondly dream, that such great advantages can be met with by chance, or in consequence of a negligent and superficial inquiry. If we are to alter the course of our life for the time to come, we must look narrowly into our conduct during the preceding part of it; for the measures to be taken for the future, are, in a great degree, suggested by what is past. He acts wisely, and is a happy man, who frequently, nay, daily reviews his words and actions: because he will doubtless perform the same duty with greater ease, and to better purpose, when he is called to it with more than ordinary solemnity. And, therefore, they who have experienced how pleasant this work is, and what a mixture of utility is joined with this pleasure, will apply to it with a cheerful mind, whenever opportunity requires it. As to others, they must of necessity set about it some time or other: I say of necessity, if I am allowed to say it is necessary to avoid the wrath to come, and to obtain peace and salvation. Repentance may possibly appear a laborious and unpleasant work to our indolence, and *to repent*, may seem a harsh expression: *to perish* however is still more harsh; but a sinful man has no other choice. Our Lord, who is Truth itself, being acquainted with the cruel execution performed by Herod upon the Galileans, takes this opportunity to declare to his hearers, that *unless they repented, they should all likewise perish*. Luke xiii. 3. The Saviour of the world, it is true, came for this very purpose, that he might save those that were miserable and lost, from the fatal necessity of being utterly undone; but he never intended to take away the happy and pleasant necessity of repentance: nay, he strengthened the obligation to it, and imposed it as a duty inseparably connected with grace and happiness. And this connexion, he not only preached in expressions to the same purpose with his forerunner, John the Baptist, but even in the very same words: *Repent ye*,

* Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.
† Se in Româ, Romæ nihil invenisse.

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matt. iv. 7. And in another place, having told us, that he came *not to call the righteous, but sinners,* Matt. ix. 13, he immediately adds, to what he called those sinners; not to a liberty of indulging themselves in sin, but, from sin *to repentance.* His blood which was shed on the cross, is indeed a balsam more precious than all the balm of Gilead and Arabia, and all the ointments of the whole world; but it is solely intended for curing the contrite in heart.

But alas! that gross ignorance of God that overclouds our mind, is the great and the unhappy cause of all the guilt we have contracted, and of that impenitence which engages us to continue in it. Had men but the least knowledge how disagreeable and hateful all sinful pollution renders us to His eternal and infinite purity; and, on the other hand, what a likeness to Him we attain by holiness, and how amiable we are thereby rendered in His sight; they would look upon this as the only valuable attainment, they would pursue it with the most vigorous efforts of their minds, and would make it their constant study day and night; that, according to the divine advice of the Apostle, being *cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,* they might *perfect holiness in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 9.

AN

EXHORTATION TO THE STUDENTS,

UPON THEIR RETURN TO THE UNIVERSITY
AFTER THE VACATION.

We are at last returned, and some are for the first time brought hither by that Supreme Hand which holds the reins of this vast universe, which rules the stormy winds and swelling sea, and distributes peace and war to nations according to its pleasure. The great Lord of the universe, and Father of mankind, while He rules the world with absolute sway, does not despise this little flock, provided we look up unto Him, and humbly pray, that we may feel the favourable effects of His presence and bounty: nay, He will not disdain to dwell within us, and in our hearts, unless we, through folly, and ignorance of our true happiness, shut the door against Him when he offers to come in. He is the Most High, yet, has chosen the humble heart for the most agreeable place of his residence on this earth: but the proud and haughty, who look with disdain on their inferiors, He, on His part, despises, and *beholds*, as it were, *afar off*. He is most holy, and dwells in no hearts but such as are purged from the dross of earthly affections; and that these may be holy, and really capable of receiving His sacred Majesty, they must of necessity be purified. *Know ye not*, says the divine Apostle, *that you, even your bodies, are the temples of the Holy Ghost*, and therefore are to be preserved pure and holy? 1 Cor. vi. 19. But the mind that dwells within them, must be still more holy, as being the priest that, with constant and unwearied piety, offers up the sacrifices and sweet incense of pious affections, cheerful obedience, ardent prayers, and divine praises, to the Deity of that temple.

Of your studies and exotic learning, I intend not to say much. The knowledge, I own, that men of letters, who are the most indefatigable in study, and have the advantage of the greatest abilities, can possibly attain to, is at best but very small. But since the knowledge of languages and sciences, however inconsiderable it may be, is the business of this society of ours, and of that period of years you are to pass here, let us do, I pray, as the Hebrews express it, "the work of the day while the day lasts *;" "for time slips silently away, and every succeeding hour is attended with greater disadvantages than that which went before it †."

Study to acquire such a philosophy as is not barren and babbling,

* Opus diei in die suo.
† Tempus nam tacitum subruit, horaque
Semper præteritâ deterior subit.

but solid and true; not such a one as floats upon the surface of endless verbal controversies, but one that enters into the nature of things: for he spoke good sense, who said, "The philosophy of the Greeks was a mere jargon and noise of words *."

You who are engaged in philosophical inquiries, ought to remember in the mean while, that you are not so strictly confined to that study, but you may, at the same time, become proficients in elocution; and, indeed, it is proper you should. I would therefore have you to apply to both these studies with equal attention, that so you may not only attain some knowledge of nature, but also be in condition to communicate your sentiments with ease, upon those subjects you understand, and clothe your thoughts with words and expressions; without which, all your knowledge will differ but very little from buried ignorance.

In joining these two studies together, you have not only reason for your guide, but also Aristotle himself for your example; for we are told, that it was his custom to walk up and down in the school in the morning, teaching philosophy, particularly those speculative and more obscure points which in that age were called *rationes acroamaticæ;* and thus he was employed till the hour appointed for anointing, and going to exercise †; but, after dinner, he applied to the more entertaining arts of persuasion, and made his scholars declaim upon such subjects as he appointed them.

But to return to my own province; for, to say the truth, I reckon all other things foreign to my purpose; whatever you do with regard to other studies, give always the preference to sacred Christian philosophy, which is, indeed, the chief philosophy, and has the pre-eminence over every other science, because it holds Christ to be *The Head* ‡, *in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.* Col. ii. 3, 9. This, the Apostle tells us, was not the case of those false Christians in his time, whose philosophy regarded only some idle superstitions and vain observations. Cultivate, therefore, I say, this sacred wisdom sent down from Heaven. Let this be your main study; for its mysteries are the most profound, its precepts the most pure, and, at the same time, the most pleasant. In this study, a weak understanding will be no disadvantage, if you have but a willing mind and ardent desires. Here, if any where, the observation holds, "That if you love learning, you cannot fail to make great progress therein §." For some who have applied with great industry to human philosophy, have found it to be like a disdainful mistress, and lost their labour; but Divine philosophy invites and encourages even those of the meanest parts.

And, indeed, it may be no small comfort and relief to young men of slow capacities, who make but little progress in human sciences, even when they apply to them with the most excessive labour and diligence, that this heavenly doctrine, though it be the most exalted in its own nature, is not only accessible to those of the lowest and meanest parts, but they are cheerfully admitted to it, graciously received, preferred to those that are proud of their learning, and very often advanced to

* Φιλοσοφια Ἑλλήνων λόγων ψοφος.
† Μιχρι τοῦ ἀλείμματος.
‡ Ὡς κεφαλην κράτει.
§ Ἐαν τις φιλομαθής, ἕση πολυμαθής. Isoc. ad Dem.

higher degrees of knowledge therein; according to that of the Psalmist, *The law of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the entrance of His word giveth light; it giveth also understanding unto the simple.* Psal. cxix. 130. You, therefore, whom some very forward youths leave far behind in other studies, take courage; and to wipe off this stain, if it be one, and compensate this discouragement, make this your refuge: you cannot possibly arrive at an equal pitch of eloquence or philosophy with some others, but what hinders you, I pray, from being as pious, as modest, as meek and humble, as holy and pure in heart, as any other person whatever? And by this means, in a very short time, you will be completely happy in the enjoyment of God, and live for ever in the blessed society of angels and spirits of just men made perfect.

But if you want to make a happy progress in this wisdom, you must, to be sure, declare war against all the lusts of the world and the flesh, which enervate your minds, weaken your strength, and deprive you of all disposition and fitness for imbibing this pure and immaculate doctrine. How stupid is it to catch so greedily at advantages so vanishing and fleeting in their nature, if, indeed, they can be called advantages at all; "advantages that are carried hither and thither, hurried from place to place by the uncertainty of their nature, and often fly away before they can be possessed *." An author remarkable for his attainments in religion, justly cries out, "O! what peace and tranquillity might he possess, who could be prevailed upon to cut off all vain anxiety, and only think of those things that are of a Divine and saving nature †!" Peace and tranquillity is, without doubt, what we all seek after, yet, there are very few that know the way to it, though it be quite plain and open. It is, indeed, no wonder that the blind who wander about without a guide, should mistake the plainest and most open path; but we have an infallible guide, and a most valiant leader. Let us follow him alone; for he that treadeth in his steps, can never walk in darkness.

Let us pray.

O! INVINCIBLE God, who seest all things! Eternal Light, before whom all darkness is light, and in comparison with whom, every other light is but darkness! The weak eyes of our understanding cannot bear the open and full rays of Thy inaccessible light; and yet, without some glimpses of that light from heaven, we can never direct our steps, nor proceed towards that country which is the habitation of light. May it therefore please Thee, O Father of lights, to send forth Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead us directly to Thy holy mountain. Thou art good, and the fountain of goodness; give us understanding, that we may keep Thy precepts. That part of our past lives, which we have lost in pursuing shadows, is enough, and indeed too much: bring back our souls into the paths of life, and let the wonderful sweetness thereof, which far exceeds all the pleasures of

* Τὰ ἄνω καὶ κάτω φερόμενα, καὶ ἀφιστάμενα, καὶ πρὶν πληρῶσαι, ἀπιόντα.

† O qui omnem vanam solicitudinem amputaret, et salutaria duntaxât ac divina cogitaret, quantam quietem et pacem possideret!

this earth, powerfully, yet pleasantly, preserve us from being drawn aside therefrom by any temptation from sin or the world. Purify, we pray Thee, our souls from all impure imaginations, that Thy most beautiful and holy image may be again renewed within us, and, by contemplating Thy glorious perfections, we may feel daily improved within us that Divine similitude, the perfection whereof we hope will at last make us for ever happy in that full and beatific vision we aspire after. Till this most blessed day break, and the shadows fly away, let Thy Spirit be continually with us, and may we feel the powerful effects of His Divine grace constantly directing and supporting our steps; that all our endeavours, not only in this society, but throughout the whole remaining part of our lives, may serve to promote the honour of Thy blessed name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

EXHORTATIONS

TO THE

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS,

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

EXHORTATION I.

WERE I allowed to speak freely what I sincerely think of most of the affairs of human life, even those that are accounted of the highest importance, and transacted with the greatest eagerness and bustle, I should be apt to say, *Magno conatu magnas nugas*,—that a great noise is made about trifles. But if you should take this amiss, as a little unseasonable upon the present occasion, and an insult upon your solemnity, I hope you will the more easily forgive me, that I place in the same rank with this philosophical convention of yours, the most famous councils and general assemblies of princes and great men; and say of their golden crowns, as well as your crowns of laurel, that they are Κατνοῦ σκιας οὐκ ἂν πριάμην—things of no value, and not worth the purchasing. Even the triumphal, inaugural, or nuptial processions of the greatest kings and generals of armies, with whatever pomp and magnificence, as well as art, they may be set off, they are, after all, so far true representations of their false, painted, and tinsel happiness, that, while we look at them, they fly away; and, in a very short time, they are followed by their funeral processions, which are the triumphs of death over those who have, themselves, triumphed during their lives. The scenes are shifted, the actors also disappear; and, in the same manner, the greatest shows of this vain world likewise pass away. Let us, that we may lop off the luxuriant branches of our vines, take a nearer view of this object, and remember, that what we now call a laurel crown, will soon be followed by cypress wreaths. It will be also proper to consider how many, who, in their time, were employed as we are now, have long ago acted their parts, and are now consigned to a long oblivion; as also, what vast numbers of the rising generation are following us at the heels, and, as it were, pushing us forward to the same land of forgetfulness! who, while they are hurrying us away, are at the same time hastening thither themselves. All that we see, all that we do, and all that we are, are but mere dreams; and if we are not sensible of this truth, it is because we are still asleep: none but minds that are awake can discern it; they, and they only, can perceive and despise these ἐμπαίγματα—*illusions* of the night. In the mean time, nothing hinders us from submitting to these, and other such customary formalities, provided our doing it interfere not with matters of much greater importance, and prospects of a different and more

exalted nature. What is it, pray, to which with the most ardent wishes, you have been aspiring throughout the whole course of these last four years? Here you have a cap and a title, and nothing at all more.

But perhaps taking this amiss, you secretly blame me in your hearts, and wish me to congratulate you upon the honour you have obtained. I cheerfully comply with your desire, and am willing to explain myself. These small presents are not the principal reward of your labours, nor the chief end of your studies; but honorary marks and badges of that erudition and knowledge wherewith your minds have been stored by the uninterrupted labours of four whole years. But whatever attainments in learning you have reached, I would have you seriously to reflect, how inconsiderable they are, and how little they differ from nothing. Nay, if what we know, is compared with what we know not, it will be found even vastly less than nothing: at least, it is an argument of little knowledge, and the sign of a vain and weak mind, to be puffed up with an overbearing opinion of our own knowledge; while, on the contrary, it is an evidence of a great proficiency in knowledge to be sensible of our ignorance and inability. "He is the wisest man," says Plato, "who knows himself to be very ill qualified for the attainment of wisdom*." Whatever be in this, we often find the sciences and arts which you cultivate, to be useless and entirely barren, with regard to the advantages of life; and, generally speaking, those other professions that are illiterate and illiberal, nay, even unlawful, meet with better treatment, and greater encouragement than what we call the liberal arts. "He that ventures upon the sea, is enriched by his voyages; he that engages in war, glitters with gold; the mean parasite lies drunk on a rich bed; and even he who endeavours to corrupt married women is rewarded for his villany. Learning alone starves in tattered rags, and invokes the abandoned arts in vain†."

But as sometimes the learned meet with a better fate, you, young gentlemen, I imagine, entertain better hopes with regard to your fortune, nor would I discourage them; yet, I would gladly moderate them a little by this wholesome advice; lean not upon a broken reed, neither let any one who values his peace, his real dignity, and his satisfaction, give himself up to hopes that are uncertain, frail, and deceitful. The human race are, perhaps, the only creatures that by this means become a torment to themselves; for, as we always grasp at futurity, we vainly promise ourselves many and great things, in which, as commonly happens, being for the most part disappointed, we must, of necessity, pay for our foolish pleasure with a proportionate degree of pain. Thus, the greatest part of mankind find the whole of this wretched life chequered with delusive joys and real torments, ill-grounded hopes

* Οὗτος σοφώτατος ἔστις ἔγνωκεν ὅτι οὐδενος ἄξιος ἐστὶ πρὸς σοφίαν. Philo. apol. Socr.

† Qui pelago credit, magno se fœnore tollit:
Qui pugnas et castra petit, præcingitur auro:
Vilis adulator picto jacet ebrius ostro;
Et qui sollicitat nuptas, ad præmia peccat.
Sola pruinosis horret facundia pannis,
Atque inopi lingua desertas invocat artes.

and fears equally imaginary: amidst these, we live in continual suspense, and die so too.

But a few, alas! a few only, yet some, who think more justly, having set their hearts upon heavenly enjoyments, take pleasure in despising with a proper greatness of mind, and trampling upon the fading enjoyments of this world. These make it their only study, and exert their utmost efforts that, having the more Divine part of their composition weaned from the world and the flesh, they may be brought to a resemblance and union with the holy and supreme God, the Father of spirits, by purity, piety, and an habitual contemplation of Divine objects. And this, to be sure, is the principal thing, with a noble ambition whereof I would have your minds inflamed; and whatever profession or manner of life you devote yourselves to, it is my earnest exhortation and request, that you would make this your constant and principal study. Fly, if you have any regard to my advice, fly far from that controversial, contentious school-divinity, which, in fact, consists in fruitless disputes about words, and rather deserves the name of vain and foolish talking.

Almost all mankind are constantly catching at something more than they possess, and torment themselves in vain. Nor is our rest to be found among these enjoyments of the world, where all things are covered with a deluge of vanity, as with a flood of fluctuating, restless waters; and the soul flying about, looking in vain for a place on which it may set its foot, most unhappily loses its time, its labour, and itself at last; like the birds in the days of the Flood, which, "having long sought for land, till their strength was quite exhausted, fell down at last, and perished in the waters *."

O! how greatly preferable to these bushes, and briers, and thorns, are the delightful fields of the Gospel, wherein pleasure and profit are agreeably mixed together, whence you may learn the way to everlasting peace; that poverty of spirit which is the only true riches, that purity of heart which is our greatest beauty, and that inexpressible satisfaction which attends the exercise of charity, humility, and meekness! When your minds are stored and adorned with these graces, they will enjoy the most pleasant tranquillity, even amidst the noise and tumults of this present life; and you will be, to use the words of Tertullian, *candidates for eternity;* a title infinitely more glorious and sublime, than what has been this day conferred upon you. And that great and last day, which is so much dreaded by the slaves of this present world, will be the most happy and auspicious to you; as it will deliver you from a dark, dismal prison, and place you in the regions of the most full and marvellous light.

Let us pray.

Most exalted God, who hast alone created, and dost govern this whole frame, and all the inhabitants thereof, visible and invisible, whose name is alone wonderful, and to be celebrated with the highest praise, as it is indeed above all praise and admiration. Let the heavens, the earth, and all the elements, praise Thee. Let darkness, light, all the

* Quæsitisque diu terris ubi sistere detur,
In mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis.

returns of days and years, and all the varieties and vicissitudes of things, praise Thee. Let the angels praise Thee, the archangels, and all the blessed court of heaven, whose very happiness it is, that they are constantly employed in celebrating Thy praises. We confess, O Lord, that we are of all creatures the most unworthy to praise Thee, yet, of all others, we are under the greatest obligations to do it: nay, the more unworthy we are, our obligation is so much the greater. From this duty, however unqualified we may be, we can by no means abstain, nor, indeed, ought we. Let our souls bless Thee, and all that is within us praise Thy holy name, who forgivest all our sins, and healest all our diseases, who deliverest our souls from destruction, and crownest them with bounty and tender mercies. Thou searchest the heart, O Lord, and perfectly knowest the most intimate recesses of it: reject not those prayers which Thou perceivest to be the voice and the wishes of the heart. Now, it is the great request of our hearts, unless they always deceive us, that they may be weaned from all earthly and perishing enjoyments; and if there is any thing to which they cleave with more than ordinary force, may they be pulled away from it by Thy Almighty hand, that they may be joined to Thee for ever in an inseparable marriage-covenant. And in our own behalf, we have nothing more to ask. We only add, in behalf of Thy Church, that it may be protected under the shadow of Thy wings, and every where, throughout the world, watered by Thy heavenly dew, that the spirit and heat of worldly hatred against it may be cooled, and its intestine divisions, whereby it is much more grievously scorched, extinguished. Bless this Nation, this City, and this University, in which we beg thou wouldest be pleased to reside, as in a garden dedicated to Thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION II.

Would you have me to speak the truth with freedom and brevity? The whole world is a kind of stage, and its inhabitants mere actors. As to this little farce of yours, it is now very near a conclusion, and you are upon the point of applying to the spectators for their applause. Should any supercilliously decline paying this small tribute, [*ἐρανον*] you surely may, with great ease, retort their contempt upon themselves, merely by saying, Let your severity fall heavy on those who admire their own performances: as to this affair of ours, we know it is nothing at all. For I will not allow myself to doubt but you are very sensible, that there is indeed nothing in it.

It would, to be sure, be very improper, especially as the evening approaches, to detain you, and my other hearers, with a long and tedious discourse, when you are already more than enough fatigued, and almost quite tired out with hearing. I shall therefore only put you in mind of one thing, and that in a few words. Let not this solemn *toy* [*ἐμπαιγμα*], however agreeable to youthful minds, so far impose upon you, as to set you a dreaming of great advantages and pleasures to be met with in this new period of life you are entering upon. Look round you, if you please, and take a near and exact survey of all the

different stations of life that are set before you. If you enter upon any of the stations of active life, what is this but jumping into a bush of thorns, where you can have no hope of enjoying quiet, and yet cannot easily get out again? But if you rather choose to enter upon some new branch of science, alas! what a small measure of knowledge is to be thus obtained, with what vast labour is even that little to be purchased, and how often, after immense toil and difficulty, will it be found, that Truth is still at a distance, and not yet extracted out of the well *. We indeed believe that the soul breathed into man, when he was first made, was pure, full of light, and every way worthy of its Divine original. But ah! the Father of mankind, how soon, and how much was he changed from what he was at first! He foolishly gave ear to the fatal seducer, and that very moment was seized upon by death, whereby he at once lost his purity, his light, or truth, and, together with himself, ruined us also.

Now, since that period, what do you commonly meet with among men of wisdom and learning, as they would wish to be accounted, but fighting and bickering in the dark? And while they dispute, with the greatest heat, but at random, concerning the Truth, that Truth escapes out of their hands, and instead of it, both parties put up with vain shadows or phantoms of it, and, according to the proverb, embrace a cloud instead of Juno.

But since we are forced to own, that even the most contemptible and minutest things in nature, often put all our philosophical subtlety to a nonplus, what ignorance and foolish presumption is it for us to aim at ransacking the most hidden recesses of Divine things, and boldly attempt to scan the Divine decrees, and the other most profound mysteries of religion, by the imperfect and scanty measures of our understandings! Whither would the presumption of man hurry him, while it prompts him to pry into every secret and hidden thing, and leave nothing at all unattempted!

As for you, young gentlemen, especially those of you that intend to devote yourselves to theological studies, it is my earnest advice and request to you, that you fly far from that infectious curiosity which would lead you into the depths of that controversial, contentious theology, which if any doctrine at all deserves the name, may be truly termed, *science falsely so called*. And that you may not, in this respect, be imposed upon by the common reputation of acuteness and learning, I confidently affirm, that to understand and be master of those trifling disputes that prevail in the schools, is an evidence of a very mean understanding; while, on the contrary, it is an argument of a genius truly great, entirely to slight and despise them, and to walk in the light of pure and peaceable truth, which is far above the dark and cloudy region of controversial disputes. But you will say, It is necessary, in order to the defence of truth, to oppose errors, and blunt the weapons of sophists. Be it so; but our disputes ought to be managed with few words, for naked truth is most effectual for its own defence, and when it is once well understood, its natural light dispels all the darkness of error. *For all things that are reproved,*

* Ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ ἡ ἀλήθεια?

are made manifest by the light, saith the Apostle. Your favourite philosopher has also told us, "That what is straight, discovers both rectitude and obliquity." And Clemens Alexandrinus has very justly observed, "That the ancient philosophers were not greatly disposed to disputes or doubting; but the latter philosophers among the Greeks, out of a vain desire to enhance their reputation, engaged so far in wrangling and contention, that their works became quite useless and trifling*."

There is but one useful controversy or dispute, one sort of war, most noble in its nature, and most worthy of a Christian, and this, not to be carried on against enemies at a great distance, but such as are bred within our own breasts: against those, it is most reasonable to wage an endless war, and them it is our duty to persecute to death. Let us all, children, young men, and old, exert ourselves vigorously in this warfare. Let our vices die before us, that death may not find us indolent, defiled, and wallowing in the mire; for then it will be most truly, and to our great misery, *death* to us: whereas, to those sanctified souls who are conformed to Christ, and conquerors by his means, it rather is to be called life, as it delivers them from their wanderings and vices, from all kinds of evils, and from that death which is final and eternal.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL GOD, who art constantly adored by thrones and powers, by seraphims and cherubims, we confess that Thou art most worthy to be praised; but we, of all others, are the most unworthy to be employed in shewing forth Thy praise. How can polluted bodies, and impure souls, which, taken together, are nothing but mere sinks of sin, praise Thee, the pure and holy Majesty of heaven? Yet, how can these bodies which Thou hast wonderfully formed, and these souls which Thou hast inspired, which owe entirely to Thine unmerited favour, all that they are, all that they possess, and all they hope for, forbear praising Thee, their wise and bountiful Creator and Father? Let our souls, therefore, and all that is within us, bless Thy holy name: yea, let all our bones say, O Lord, who is like unto Thee; who is like unto Thee? Far be it, most gracious Father, from our hearts, to harbour any thing that is displeasing to Thee: let them be, as it were, temples dedicated to Thy service, thoroughly purged from every idol and image, from every object of impure love and earthly affection. Let our most gracious King and Redeemer dwell and reign within us. May He take full possession of us by His Spirit, and govern all our actions. May He extend His peaceable and saving kingdom throughout the whole habitable world, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Let the nations acknowledge their King, and the isles be glad in Him; and particularly, that which we inhabit, with those in its neighbourhood. And, that they may be truly blessed in Him, may they daily submit more perfectly and dutifully to His golden sceptre, and the holy laws of His gospel! Bless this Nation and City,

* Ὅτι οἱ παλαιότατοι των φιλοσοφῶν οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τὸ αμοιβηπτῖν καὶ ἀπορεῖν ἐφέροντο ἀλλ' οἱ ἀπ' αὐτῶν παρ' ἕλλησι νεώτεροι, ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας κενῆς καὶ ἀτελοῦς ελεγκτικῶς ἅμα καὶ ἐριστικῶς, εἰς τὴν ἀχρηστον ἐξαγονται φλυαριαν.

and this our University; may it be continually watered with the dew of Thy Spirit, and plentifully produce fruit acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION III.

This day, which has been the object of your earnest wishes, throughout the course of four whole years, is now almost over, and hastening to a close. What has it produced for your advantage? Can he that has reaped most successfully of you all, say, he has filled his arms with sheaves? Though possibly you would excuse me to express myself with great freedom on this occasion, yet, I will not take the liberty to depreciate too much your past studies, the specimens you have given to-day of your abilities, and the degree that has been conferred upon you. This at least, I imagine, I may say, without offence, the most of those things we greedily catch at, and labour most earnestly to obtain, and consequently, even your philosophy is a real and demonstrative truth of that great paradox, *that there is a vacuity in the nature of things*. And, in truth, how great is this vacuity, seeing even the human race is no inconsiderable part of it! Though this day is marked with more than ordinary solemnity, it is, after all, but the conclusion and period of a number of days that have been idly spent, and is itself elapsing to little or no purpose, as well as the rest. But O! how glorious must that blessed day be, which all purified souls, and such as are dear to God, earnestly long for, throughout the whole of this perishing life, and constantly wait, with a kind of impatience, until it dawn, and the shadows fly away.

I am, indeed, of opinion, that those of you who think most justly, will readily own, your attainments, hitherto, are of no great moment. But possibly, henceforth you intend to begin life, as it were, anew: you aspire to greater matters, and entertain views worthy of human nature; you already begin to live, and to be wise; you form desires, and conceive hopes of rising to arts, riches, and honours. All this is very well. Yet, there is one consideration, I would have you to admit among these ingenious projects and designs. What if death should come upon you, and, looking with an envious eye upon this towering prospect, put a stop to a project that extends itself so far into futurity, and, like a spider's web, entirely destroy it with a gentle breath of wind? Nor would this be any prodigy, or indeed an extraordinary event, but the common fate of almost all mankind. "We are always resolving to live, and yet never set about life in good earnest*." Archimedes was not singular in his fate; but a great part of mankind die unexpectedly, while they are poring upon the figures they have described in the sand. O wretched mortals! who, having condemned themselves, as it were, to the mines, seem to make it their chief study to prevent their ever regaining their liberty. Hence, new employments are assumed in the place of old ones; and, as the Roman philosopher truly expresses it, "one hope succeeds another,

* Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam.

one instance of ambition makes way for another; and we never desire an end of our misery, but only that it may change its outward form *." When we cease to be candidates, and to fatigue ourselves in soliciting interest, we begin to give our votes and interest to those who solicit us in their turn. When we are wearied of the trouble of prosecuting crimes at the bar, we commence judges ourselves; and he who is grown old in the management of other men's affairs for money, is at last employed in improving his own wealth. At the age of fifty, says one, I will retire, and take my ease; or the sixtieth year of my life shall entirely disengage me from public offices and business. Fool! art thou not ashamed to reserve to thyself the last remains and dregs of life? Who will stand surety that thou shalt live so long? And what immense folly is it, so far to forget mortality, as to think of beginning to live at that period of years, to which a few only attain!

As for you, young gentlemen, I heartily wish you may think more justly. Let your souls, as it were, retire into themselves, and dwell at home; and having shaken off the trifles that make a bustle and noise around you, consider seriously, that the remaining part of your life is long only in one respect, (and in this, indeed, its length may be justly complained of,) that it is fraught with every sort of misery and affliction, and has nothing agreeable in it, but the study of heavenly wisdom alone; for every thing else is vanity. Look about you, and see, whether there is any thing worthy of your affection, and whether every thing you see, does not rather excite your indignation and aversion. At home, are contentions and disputes; abroad in the fields, robbers; clamour and noise at the bar; wickedness in the camp; hypocrisy in the church; and vexation or lamentable mistakes every where. Among the rich and great, there are false and inconstant friendships, bitter enmities, envy, fraud, and falsehood; and cares, in great numbers, flutter round the most stately and sumptuous palaces.

What a considerable part of mankind are struggling with open and sharp afflictions! To whatever side you turn yourself, what do you commonly hear but lamentation and mourning? How many complaints of the poor, that are distressed for want of daily bread, or drag a most wretched life under the grievous oppression of powerful tyrants! How frequent are the groans of the sick and languishing. How great the multitude of those who lament their friends and relations carried off by death, and will themselves, in a short time, and for the same reason, be lamented by others! And, to conclude, how innumerable are the miseries and afflictions of various kinds, that seem alternately to re-echo to one another! Can it be any wonder, then, that a life of this kind should sometimes force, even from a wise man, such expressions of sorrow and concern as the following: "O mother, why didst thou bring me forth, to be oppressed with afflictions and sorrows? Why didst thou introduce me into a life full of briers and thorns† ?"

But you are now philosophers, and amidst these dismal calamities,

* Spes spem excipit, ambitionem ambitio, et miseriarum non quæritur finis sed schema tantum mutatur.

† Μήτερ, ἱμὲ τὶ μ' ἔτίκτες ἔπει πολύμοχθον ἔτικτες,
Τίπτε μὲ τωδε βίῳ δῶκας ἀκαιθοφόρῳ.

you comfort yourselves with the inward and hidden riches of wisdom, and the sciences you have acquired. The sciences! Tell us, in what part of the earth they are to be found. Let us know, pray, where they dwell, that we may flock thither in great numbers. I know, indeed, where there is abundance of noise, with vain and idle words, and a jarring of opinions between contending disputants; I know, where ignorance, under the disguise of a gown and a beard, has obtained the title of science; but, where true knowledge is to be found, I know not. We grope in the dark, and though it is truth only we are in quest of, we fall into innumerable errors. But, whatever may be our case with respect to the knowledge of nature, as to that of heavenly and Divine things, let us cheerfully embrace that rich present which Infinite Goodness has made us, and be thankful, that the *day-spring from on high hath visited us.* "Because there was no wisdom on the earth," says Lactantius, "He sent a teacher from heaven*." Him, let us follow as our guide: for he who follows his direction, *shall not walk in darkness.*

Let us pray.

INFINITE, Eternal Creator and King of heaven and earth, bodies and spirits, who, being unmoved Thyself, movest all things, and changest them at Thy pleasure, while Thou remainest Thyself altogether unchangeable; who supportest all things by Thy powerful hand, and governest them by Thy nod, the greatest as well as the least; so that the greatest are no burden to Thee, nor dost Thou contemn the least. Behold! the nations before Thee, are as the drop of the bucket, and like the small dust of the balance; and these isles of ours, with all the rest in the world, are, in Thy sight, but a very little thing. Yet Thou deignest to be present in our assemblies, and take notice of our affairs, which are very inconsiderable. Let our souls adore Thee, and fall down, with the greatest humility, at the footstool of Thy throne, continually entreating Thy grace, and constantly offering Thee glory. Our praises add nothing to Thee; but they exalt ourselves, enhance our happiness, and unite us with the society of angels; yet, Thou receivest them with a gracious hand, as most acceptable sacrifices, and incense of a sweet-smelling savour. Let us celebrate Thee, O Lord, who art great, and greatly to be praised. Let all nations praise Thee, from the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof. Set our hearts on fire with the flames of Thy Divine love, that they may wholly ascend to Thee as burnt offerings, and nothing of ours may remain with us. O blessed transmigration, where the blind confidence of the flesh is transformed into a lively and pure faith, that has no dependence but upon Thee alone; where self-love, and the love of the world, are exchanged for the love of Thy infinite beauty; when our will shall centre in Thine, and be altogether absorbed by it. Let this change, O bountiful Father, be brought about, for it is a change only to be effected by the power of Thy hand; and, as soon as our souls are made sensible of it, Thy praise shall be for ever sounded within us, as in temples devoted to Thy service.

* Cùm nulla in terris esset sapientia, è cœlo misit doctorem.

Let Thy whole Church, O Lord, flourish and rejoice in the light of Thy favour. Be favourable to this our University, City, and Nation. Dispel, we pray Thee, the thick clouds, and quiet the winds and storms; for, when they rage most, and make the greatest noise, they know Thy voice, and obey it. Thou art the only God of peace, who createst it with a word, and makest righteousness and peace mutually to kiss one another. We depend upon Thee only; and to Thee alone, we render praise and glory, as far as we can, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

EXHORTATION IV.

Our life is but a point, and even less than a point; but as it is not a mathematical point, as they call it, not quite indivisible, when we divide it into minute parts, it appears something considerable, and assumes the imaginary appearance of a large space of time; nay, according to Aristotle's notion, it appears divisible *in infinitum*. Besides those common and idle divisions of human life, into the four stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and into periods of ten years, which suppose the yet smaller divisions of years and months; men have many various ways of distributing the periods of their life, according to the different occupations and studies they have been engaged in, the remarkable events that have happened to them, and the several alterations and revolutions in the course of their lives. And I doubt not, but you, young gentlemen, look up on this present instant of time as the beginning of a new period of your life. You have my leave to do so, provided you seriously consider, at the same time, that the whole of the life we live in this world, is of a frail and fleeting nature, and, in some respect, nothing at all. And into whatever parts or periods we divide it, if we consider the miseries and lamentable calamities with which it is fraught, the life even of a child, may seem too long; but, if we consider the time only, we must conclude the life of the oldest man to be exceeding short and fleeting.

A great part of mankind no sooner look upon themselves to be capable of worldly affairs, and think on entering upon some profession suitable to a state of manhood, but they are cut off, in the very beginning of their course, by an unforeseen and untimely death. And, to be sure, this is the great distemper of young, and even of old men, that, by their desires and designs, they launch out a great way into futurity, and form a series of projects for many years to come: while, in the mean time, they rarely or at least very superficially, consider, how foolish and precarious it is to depend upon to-morrow, and how soon this present form of ours may disappear; how soon we may return to our original dust; *and that very day*, as the royal prophet warns us, *our thoughts*, even the wisest and best concerted thoughts of the greatest men, and most exalted princes, *perish*. And this I take particular notice of, that no such illusion may get possession of your minds. For it is not the common sort of mankind only, that impose upon themselves in this respect, but the generality of those who desire to be accounted, not only men of learning, but also adepts in wisdom, and actually pass for such. Not that I would prohibit your

making an early and prudent choice, under the Divine direction, of the employment and profession of life you intend to pursue; nay, I would use every argument to persuade you to make use of such a choice, and when you have made it, to prosecute the intention of it with the greatest diligence and activity. I only put you upon your guard, not to entertain many and towering hopes in this world, nor to form a long series of connected projects; because you will find them all more vain and fleeting than illusions of the night! Some necessary means will fail, some favourable opportunity be missed; after all industry, the expected event may not happen, or the thread of your life may be cut, and thereby all your projects be rendered abortive. And though your life should be drawn out to ever so great a length, and success constantly answer your expectations, yet, you know, and I wish you would remember it, the fatal day will come at last, perhaps when it is least expected; that fatal and final day, I say, will at last come, when we must leave all our enjoyments, and all our schemes, those we are now carrying on, and those we have brought to perfection, as well as those that are only begun, and those that subsist only in hopes and ideas.

And these very arguments, which have been used to confine your minds from indulging themselves in too remote prospects, will also serve to persuade you, in another sense, to look much farther; not with regard to worldly enjoyments, for such prospects, strictly speaking, canot be called long, but to look far beyond all earthly and perishing things, to those that are heavenly and eternal. And those that will not raise their eyes to such objects, as the Apostle Peter expresses it, *are blind, and cannot see afar off.*

But of you, my dear youths, I expect better things. I need not, I imagine, use many words to persuade you to industry, and a continual progress in human studies and philosophical learning. If the violence and infelicity of the times have deprived you of any part of that period of years usually employed in these studies at this university, you will surely repair that loss, as soon as possible, by your subsequent reading and application. But, if no such misfortune had happened, you are not, I believe, ignorant, that our schools are only intended for laying the foundations of those studies upon which, years, and indefatigable industry, are to raise the superstructure of more complete erudition: which, by the accession of the Divine Spirit, may be consecrated into a temple for God. And this is what I would recommend to your esteem, and your earnest desires, beyond any other study whatever, *That you may be holy, because our God is holy:* that, when you leave this university, those with whom you converse, may not find you puffed up with pride, on account of a little superficial learning, nor bigotted, talkative, or fond of entering into unseasonable disputes; but consider you all as patterns and examples of piety, purity, temperance, modesty, and all Christian virtues; particularly that humility which shone so brightly in Christ himself, and which he earnestly exhorts all his disciples to learn from him. I will not suspect, that any one of you will turn out to be an immodest person, a glutton, or drunkard, or in any shape, impious and profane; but I earnestly exhort and beseech you, my dear young men, to make it, above

all other things, your principal study, to have your hearts purged from all impure and ignoble love of the world and the flesh, that, in this earth you may live to God only; and then, to be sure, when you remove out of it, you will live with Him for ever in heaven.

May the honorary title you have this day received be happy and auspicious! But I earnestly pray the Father of Lights, that he would deign to bestow upon you a title more solid and exalted than it is in the power of man to give, that you may be called the *sons of God*, and that your conversation may be suitable to so great a name, and so glorious a Father.

Let us pray.

Eternal King! Thy throne is established and immoveable from everlasting, and will continue so throughout all the ages of eternity. Before the mountains were brought forth, before thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. All things that exist, whether visible or invisible, derive from Thee their being, and all that they possess: and they all, from the least to the greatest, are subservient to Thy purposes, who art their supreme King and Father. Many of them, indeed, act without knowledge or design, yet serve Thee with a constant and unerring obedience; others pay their homage from principles of reason and inclination; and all the rest are forced to promote Thy intentions, though by constraint and against their wills. Thou art great, O Lord, Thou art great, and greatly to be praised, and of Thy greatness there is no end. The heavens are far raised from the earth, but Thy majesty is much farther exalted above all our thoughts and conceptions. Impress, we pray Thee, on our hearts, most bountiful Father, a profound sense of our meanness and insignificancy; and make us acceptable to Thee, through Thy grace, in thy beloved Jesus, blotting out all our sins by the blood of his cross, and purifying our hearts by the effusion of Thy Spirit from on high. Illuminate, most gracious God, this assembly of ours, by the light of Thy Divine favour, and let Thy effectual blessing, we pray Thee, attend the work we are now employed about, by Thy approbation, and the gracious disposition of Thy providence, and may the result of all be to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION V.

The complaint with regard to the variety of all perishing and transitory enjoyments, which has been long general among mankind, is indeed just and well-founded; but it is no less true, that the vanity which resides in the heart of man himself, exceeds every thing of that kind we observe in the other parts of the visible creation; for, amongst all the creatures that we see around us, we can find nothing so fleeting and inconstant; it flutters hither and thither, and forsaking that only perfect good which is truly suited to its nature and circumstances, grasps at phantoms and shadows of happiness, which it pursues with a folly more than childish.

Man wanders about on this earth; he hopes, he wishes, he seeks, he gropes and feels about him; he desires, he is hot, he is cold, he is blind, and complains that evil abounds every where; yet, he is himself the cause of those evils which rage in the world, but most of all in his own breast; and therefore, being tossed between the waves thereof, that roll continually within and without him, he leads a restless and disordered life, until he be at last swallowed up in the unavoidable gulf of death. It is, moreover, the shame and folly of the human race, that the greatest part of them do not resolve upon any fixed and settled method of life, but, like the brute creatures, live and die without design, and without proposing any reasonable end. For how few are there, who seriously and frequently consider with themselves, whence they come, whither they are going, and what is the purpose of their life: who are daily reviewing the state of their own minds, and often descend into themselves, that they may as frequently ascend, by their thoughts and meditations, to their exalted Father, and their heavenly country; who take their station upon temporal things, and view those that are eternal! Yet, these are the only men that can be truly said to live, and they alone can be accounted wise.

And to this it is, my dear youths, that I would willingly engage your souls; nay, I heartily wish they were carried thither by the fiery chariots of celestial wisdom. Let the common sort of mankind admire mean things; let them place their hopes on riches, honours, and arts, and spend their lives in the pursuit of them; but let your souls be inflamed with a far higher ambition. Yet, I would not altogether prohibit you these pursuits: I only desire you to be moderate in them. These enjoyments are neither great in themselves, nor permanent; but it is surprising, how much vanity is inflated by them. What a conceited, vain nothing is the creature we call man! For, because few are capable to discern true blessings, which are solid and intrinsically beautiful, therefore the superficial ones, and such as are of no value at all, are catched at; and those who in any measure attain to the possession of them, are puffed up and elated thereby.

If we consider things as they are, it is an evidence of a very wrong turn of mind, to boast of titles and fame; as they are no part of ourselves, nor can we depend upon them. But he that is elevated with a fond conceit of his own knowledge, is a stranger to the nature of things, and particularly to himself; since he knows not that the highest pitch of human knowledge ought, in reality, rather to be called ignorance. How small and inconsiderable is the extent of knowledge! Even the most contemptible things in nature, are sufficient to expose the greatness of our ignorance. And with respect to Divine things, who dares to deny, that the knowledge mankind has of them is next to nothing? Because the weak eyes of our understanding, confined, as they are, within such narrow houses of clay, cannot bear the piercing light of Divine things; therefore, the Fountain of all wisdom hath thought proper to communicate such imperfect discoveries of Himself, as are barely sufficient to direct our steps to the superior regions of perfect light. And whoever believes this truth, will, doubtless, make it his chief care and principal study, constantly to follow this lamp of Divine light that shines in darkness, and not to

deviate from it either to the right hand or the left. It is, indeed, my opinion, that no man of ingenuity ought to despise the study of philosophy, or the knowledge of languages, or grammar itself: though to be sure a more expeditious and successful method of teaching them were much to be wished. But what I would recommend with the greatest earnestness, and persuade you to, if possible, is, that you would inseparably unite with such measures of learning and improvement of your minds as you can attain, purity of religion, Divine love, moderation of soul, and an agreeable, inoffensive behaviour. For you are not ignorant what a low and empty figure the highest attainments in human sciences must make, if they be compared with the dignity and duration of the soul of man: for, however considerable they may be in themselves, yet, with regard to their use, and their whole design, they are confined within the short space of this perishing life. But the soul, which reasons, which is employed in learning and teaching, in a few days will for ever bid farewell to all these things, and remove to another country. O, how inconsiderable are all arts and sciences, all eloquence and philosophy, when compared with a cautious concern that our last exit out of this world may be happy and auspicious, and that we may depart out of this life candidates for immortality, at which we can never arrive but by the beautiful way of holiness.

Let us pray.

INFINITE and Eternal God! who inhabitest thick darkness and light inaccessible, whom no mortal hath seen, or can see; yet all thy Works evidently declare and proclaim Thy wisdom, Thy power, and Thy infinite goodness: And, when we contemplate these Thy perfections, what is it our souls can desire, but that they may love Thee, worship Thee, serve Thee, for ever proclaim Thy praise, and celebrate Thy exalted name, which is above all praises, and all admiration? Thy throne is constantly surrounded with thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits, who continually adore Thee, and cry out without ceasing *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.* Let others seek what they will, and find and embrace what they can; may we have always this one fixed and settled purpose, that it is good for us to draw near to God. Let the seas roar, the earth be shaken, and all things go to ruin and confusion; yet, the soul that adheres to God, will remain safe and quiet, and shall not be moved for ever. O blessed soul, that has Thee for its rest, and all its salvation! It shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; it shall not fear when heat cometh, nor shall it be uneasy in a year of drought. It is our earnest petition and prayer, O Father, that Thy hands my loosen all our chains, and effectually deliver our souls from all the snares and allurements of the world and the flesh; and that, by that same bountiful and most powerful hand of Thine, they may be for ever united to Thee through Thy only begotten Son, who is our union and our peace. Be favourably present, most gracious God, with this assembly of ours, that whatever we undertake, in obedience to Thy will, may be carried to perfection by the aid of Thy grace, and tend to the glory of Thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION VI.

I AM not ignorant, that it is one of the common arts of life, to set off our own things with all the pomp we can; and, if there is any worth in them, by no means to depreciate it, but rather to endeavour, with all our might, to enhance their value as much as possible: nay, those of them which are quite vain and worthless, we use to magnify with pompous expressions, and daub with false colours, and to do otherwise is reckoned a kind of rustic simplicity. But you, young gentlemen, who are acquainted with my manner, will, I imagine, easily forgive this indifference of mine; and, therefore, I say, if there are any who despise these performances of ours, we leave them at full liberty, for we ourselves held them in contempt before: but to speak freely, together with them, we undervalued all worldly things; they are all made of the same mean materials [Παντα μία κόνις.] O life, short with regard to duration, long in consideration of thy miseries involved in darkness, beset with snares, still fluctuating between false joys and real torments, groundless hopes and fears equally imaginary, yet foolishly, and even to distraction, loved by most! We will not die, and yet, we know not how to live. Our present possessions are loathsome as food to a man in a fever, and we greedily catch at future enjoyments, which, when they come to be present, will be received with the same indifference: for, among the advantages of this fleeting life, nothing is equally agreeable to those who have it in possession, and those who have it only in desire and hope.

We are all in general of such a nature, that we are weary of ourselves, and, what we lately preferred to every thing else, upon experience we reject. This inconstancy is undoubtedly a sign of a mind distempered, forcibly drawn away from its centre, and separated from its only durable rest. Nor need you go far, young gentlemen, to look for an instance of this distemper: let any of you descend into himself, (which very few do, and even they but rarely,) he will find it within him; upon a very slight inquiry, he will surely be sensible of it. For passing other considerations, with what fervent wishes have you, in your hearts, longed for this day! Yet I forewarn you, that all your pleasure will either die with the day itself, which is now fast drawing to a close, or but for a very short time survive it. And, as commonly happens, it will be succeeded by the anxious cares of beginning life, as it were, anew; or, which is much more grievous and unhappy, and from which, I earnestly pray, you may be all effectually preserved, by those temptations and allurements of vice, which tend to debauch and ruin you. For these allurements, after the manner of some robbers, attack the unwary and inexperienced with blandishments and caresses, that thereby they may have an opportunity to undo them. If therefore, as soon as ye enter upon a life of freedom, those deceitful and deadly pleasures of sense tempt you with their delusive smiles, I would put you in mind, how unworthy it is of a free and generous mind, especially that of a Christian, to become an abject slave, and submit to the most shameful bondage; how disgraceful and wretched a choice it is, to become the *slave of a mad, distracted*

master ;* and how much more generous and exalted is the pleasure of despising them all, and trampling them under foot, when they come in competition with the pure and permanent delights of Divine love.

As to exalted degrees of honour, and heaps of riches, the idols of all ranks of mankind, which they worship with the rage of enthusiasm and madness, we may not only apply to them what was observed of old concerning Hercules's statue, and say, "They have nothing Divine in them †;" but also, that they are entirely void of real goodness. Even those who have the greatest experience of them, are at last obliged to own this: the force of truth extorts the confession, though they make it with regret and against their will. All the beauty and brightness of these idols resemble the decorations of a stage, that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar; and the enjoyment of them is, in reality, but a splendid kind of slavery, and gilded misery. It is a pathetic expression of St. Bernard, "O ambition, the torture of the ambitious, how happens it, that though thou tormentest all, thou yet makest thyself agreeable to all ‡?" O how easily does even the least glimpse of eternal and infinite beauty, raze out of the mind all the impressions made upon it by the objects we daily converse with on this earth, and turn its admiration of them into contempt and disdain.

But if any one, having thoroughly examined and despised these shadows, resolves solely to pursue a more complete knowledge of things, and follow the streams of learning, we cannot deny, that he judges most justly; yet, after all, he must know, if he is wise, or at least he ought to know, that he may be wise, what vanity and superfluity is to be met with even here §: for often, when one has applied himself to his books and studies with the greatest assiduity, and almost spent his life upon them, all his pains evaporate into smoke, and the labour of years is entirely lost. And, what is most of all to be lamented, this is sometimes the case with respect to theology, which is the chief of all arts and sciences, as so large a portion of that vineyard is still possessed with briers and thorns. How many are the disputes and controversies, how many the trifling arguments and cavils, which possibly may have something of the sharpness of thorns, but undoubtedly a great deal of their barrenness and their hurtful quality! A philosopher of old, severely reproves the sophisters of his time in these words: "What was formerly the love of wisdom, is now become the love of words ‖." We, to be sure, may substitute in place of this, a complaint still more bitter, that what was theology before, is now become foolish talking; and that many of our divines, though they serve one God, and that the *God of peace*, yet split into parties upon the lightest occasions, and with great impiety divide the whole world into factions. And I am much afraid, this evil in a great measure derives its original from the education of youth in schools and colleges. For the most part of men manage this business, as if disputing was the end of learning,

* Δοῦλον γινέσθαι παραφρονοῦντος δεσπότου.

† Ὡς οὐδὲν ἐἰσι θεῖον.

‡ O! ambitio, ambientium crux, quomodo omnes torquens omnibus places?

§ Πολλα ἐστι κενα καὶ περίεργα.

‖ Quæ philosophia fuit, facta philologia est.

as fighting is the design of going to war: hence the youth, when they enter the school, begin disputing, which never ends but with their life. Death imposes silence, and so, at last, "these fierce passions of their minds, and these inveterate contentions, are composed to rest, by the weight of a little dust thrown upon them *."

As for you, young gentlemen, if my earnest wishes and sincere advice can have any weight with you, you will early extricate yourselves out of these flames of contention, that your minds, being lighted up by the pure and celestial fire of the Divine Spirit, may shine forth in holiness, and burn with the most fervent charity.

Let us pray.

Honour and praise is due to Thee, O infinite God. This is the universal voice of all the blessed spirits on high, and all the saints on earth: worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, because Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are. We, here before Thee, with united hearts and affections offer Thee, as we can, the sacrifice of gratitude, love and praise. How much are we indebted to Thee, for ourselves, and for all that we possess! For in Thee we live, move, and have our being. Thou hast redeemed us from our sins, having given the Son of Thy love, as a sacrifice and ransom for our souls: the chastisement of our peace fell upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. On this consideration, we acknowledge we are no longer at our own disposal, since we are bought with a price, and so very great a price, that we may glorify Thee, O Father, and Thy Son, in our souls and our bodies, which are so justly Thine. May we devote ourselves to Thee, through the whole remaining part of our life, and disdain the impure and ignoble slavery of sin, the world, and the flesh, that in all things we may demean, ourselves as becomes the sons of God, and the heirs of Thy celestial kingdom, and make daily greater progress in our journey towards the happy possession thereof.

Bless Thy Church, and our Nation, and this our University: may it be Thine, we pray Thee. We entreat that Thou wouldst become our father, our protector, and our supreme teacher, who hast Thy chair in heaven, and teachest the hearts of men on this earth. May the youth flourish under Thy instruction, that they may be not only learned, but especially upright, pious, and true Christians, entirely devoted to the honour of Thy name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

EXHORTATION VII.

These academical exercises of ours are, to be sure, no great matter, nor do we make any high account of them; yet, after all, we set no higher, perhaps even a less value upon the bustling affairs of mankind, which make a much greater noise, and the farces that are acted upon the more exalted theatres of the world: which, to speak my sentiments

* Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt. Virgil. Geor. iv. 8,1 6.

in a few words, are for the most part outwardly more pompous than these of ours, but inwardly equally vain, and more insignificant than the busy amusements of "children playing on the sands, and eagerly building little houses, which, with giddy levity, they instantly pull down again *." Or, if you chose to be more severe upon the fruitless labours of mankind, and their busy and irregular motions backward and forward, and from one place to another, you may, with a great man, who knew all these things by experience, compare them to the *fluttering of frightened flies, the toilsome hurry of the ants, and the motions of puppets* †. But he that, amidst all the confusions and commotions which happen in human affairs here below, has recourse to Divine contemplation and the hopes of eternity, as the lofty impregnable tower of true wisdom, "is the only person that enjoys uninterrupted ease and tranquillity, like the heavenly bodies, which constantly move on in their orbits, and are never, by any violence, diverted from their course ‡."

And indeed, what wonder is it, that he can easily view all the dreadful appearances of this wretched life with a resolute and steady countenance, who, by frequent interviews and daily conversation with death itself, which we call the *king of terrors* §, has rendered it familiar to him, and thereby not only divested it of its terrors, but also placed it in a beautiful, pleasant, and quite amiable light. By this means, he dies daily; and doubtless, before he suffers a natural death, he dies in a more exalted sense of the word, by withdrawing, as far as is possible, his mind from the encumbrance of earthly things, and even while it lodges in the body, weaning it from all the worldly objects that are placed about him. And, in this very sense, philosophy of old was most properly called the *meditation of death* ||, which the Roman orator has, in my opinion, explained with great propriety, and the precision of a philosopher. "What is it we do," says he, "when we withdraw the mind from pleasure, that is, the body, from our means and substance that is the servant of the body, that provides for its wants from the commonwealth, and every kind of business: what is it we then do, I say, but recall it to itself, and oblige it to stay at home? Now to withdraw the mind from the body, is nothing else but to learn to die ¶." Let us, therefore, reason thus, if you will take my advice, and separate ourselves from our bodies; that is, let us accustom ourselves to die: this, even while we sojourn on this earth, will be to the soul a life like to that which it will enjoy in heaven; and, being deli-

* Ὡς ὅτε τίς ψάμαθον συνάγη παῖς ἄγχι θαλασσης,
Ὃς ἔπει οὖν ποίησεν ἀθύρματα, νηπιέτοισιν
Ἂψ αὖθις συνέχευσε ποσιν καὶ χερσιν ἀθυρων.

† Μυϊδίων ἑπτόημενων διαδρομας μυρμίκων ταλαιπορίας καὶ αχθοφορίας καὶ σιγλλάρια νευροσπαστούμενα.

‡ Otia solus agit, sicut cœlestia semper
Inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera lapsu. Luc. lib. ii.

|| Φρικωδεστάτην ἔικονα.

§ Μελέτη θανάτου.

¶ Quid aliud agimus, cum a voluptate, id est a corpore, cum a re familiari quæ ministra est et famula corporis, cum a republica cum a negotio omni severamus animum, quid tum agimus (inquam) nisi illum ad seipsum advocamus, et secum esse cogimus? Secernere autem a corpore animum, necquicquam aliud est quam emori discere.

vered from these fetters, we shall move at a better rate, the course of our souls will be less retarded in our journey to that happy place, at which when we arrive, we can then, and then only, be truly said to live. For this life is but a kind of death, the miseries whereof I could paint, if it were seasonable; but, to be sure, it was most justly called *a life of the greatest misery* * by Dionysius the Areopagite, or whoever was the author of that book which goes under his name.

And indeed, young gentlemen, I am of opinion, that such a view and meditation of death, will not be unsuitable, or improper, even for you, though you are in the prime of life, and your minds in their full vigour: nay, I would gladly hope, you yourselves will not imagine it would, nor be at all offended at me, as if, by mentioning that inauspicious word unseasonably, I disturbed your present joy, drew a kind of black cloud over this bright day of festivity, or seem to mix among your laurels, a branch of the hated cypress. For a wise man would not willingly owe his joy to madness, nor think it a pleasure, foolishly to forget the situation of his affairs.

The wise man alone feels true joy: and real wisdom is the attainment of a Christian only, who bears with life, but hopes for death, and passes through all the storms and tempests of the former with an undauntedness of mind, but with the most fervent wishes, looks for the latter as the secure port and the *fair havens*† in the highest sense of the expression; whose mind is humble, and, at the same time, exalted, neither depending upon foreign, that is, external advantages, nor puffed up with his own; and neither elevated nor depressed by any turns or vicissitude of fortune.

He is the wise man, who relishes things as they really are; who is not, with the common sort of mankind, that are always children, terrified by bug-bears, nor pleased with painted rattles: who has a greatness of soul, vastly superior to all fading and perishing things; who judges of his improvements by his life, and thinks he knows every thing he does not covet, and every thing he does not fear. The only thing he desires, is the favour and countenance of the Supreme King; the only thing he fears, is His displeasure. And, without doubt, a mind of this cast must, of necessity, be the habitation of constant serenity, exalted joy, and gladness springing from on high. And this is the man, that is truly possessed of that *εὐθυμίαν καὶ γαλήνην*,—tranquillity and happy disposition of mind, which the Philosophers boast of, the Divines recommend, but few attain. And though he will neither willingly suffer himself to be called a philosopher, nor a philologist, yet he is, in reality, *Θεόσοφος*, well versed in the things of God, and, by a kind of Divine influence and instruction, has attained to the light of pure and peaceable truth: where he passes his days in the greatest quietness and serenity, far above the cloudy and stormy regions of controversy and disputation.

If any one of you has been thus instructed, he has certainly attained the highest of all arts, and has entered upon the most glorious liberty, even before he hath received any University degree. But the rest, though they are presently to have the title of Master of Arts, still con-

* Πολυπαθεστατην ζωην.
† Καλούς λιμενας.

tinue a silly, servile set of men, under a heavy yoke of bondage, whereby even their minds will be cramped with oppressive laws, far more intolerable than any discipline however severe. None of you, I imagine, is so excessively blinded with self-conceit, so ignorant of the nature of things, and unacquainted with himself, as to dream that he is already a philosopher, or be puffed up with an extravagant opinion of his own knowledge, because he has gone through the ordinary exercises at the University; though, to speak the truth, the philosophy which prevails in the schools, is of a vain, airy nature, and more apt to inspire the mind with pride, than to improve it. As it is my earnest prayer, so it is also the object of my hope, that you will retire from this Seminary, with your minds excited to a keen and wholesome thirst after true erudition, rather than blown up with the wild-fire of science, falsely so called; and what, above all other attainments, is of greatest consequence, that you will leave us, deeply affected with the most ardent love of heavenly wisdom. Whatever may be your fate with respect to other things, it is my earnest request, that it be your highest ambition, and your principal study, to be true Christians; that is, to be humble, meek, pure, holy, and followers of your most auspicious Captain, the Lamb, wherever he goeth. For he that followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but be conducted, through the morning light of Divine grace, to the meridian and never-ending brightness of glory.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL Father of mercies and of lights, the only rest of the immortal souls which Thou hast created, and their never-failing consolation: Into what by-paths of error do our souls divert, and to what dangers are they exposed on every hand, when they stray away from Thee! But, while they keep within Thy hiding-place, O Most High, they are safe under the shadow of Thy wings. O how happy are they, and how well do they live, who pass their whole lives in that secret abode, where they may continually refresh themselves with the delicious fruits of Thy love, and show forth Thy praise! where they may taste and see that Thou art good, O Lord, and be thoroughly persuaded of the immense riches of Thy bounty, which all our miseries cannot exceed, nor our poverty exhaust; nay, which the constant effusion of them upon the whole universe, and all its parts, cannot in the least diminish. As for us who are before Thee, the most unworthy of all Thy creatures, yet, at the same time, the most excessively loaded with all the instances of Thy goodness, can we avoid crying out with the united voices of our hearts, Let praise be ascribed to the Lord, because he is good, and His mercy endureth for ever. Who shall declare the great and wonderful works of God? Who shall show forth His praise? Who ruleth by His power for ever, and His eyes observe the nations, that the rebellious may not exalt themselves. Who restores our souls to life, and suffers not our feet to be moved. But, on the other hand, alas! how justly may our songs be interrupted with bitter lamentations, that, under such strong and constant rays of his bounty, our hearts are so cold towards Him! O how faint and languid is our love to Him! How very little, or near to nothing, is the whole of that flame which we feel within us! And, as that love fails within us, we mis-

place our affections upon the things around us; and as we follow vanity, we become vain and miserable at the same time. But may Thy Spirit, O Lord, whom we humbly and earnestly beg of Thee, descending into our hearts, inspire us thoroughly with life, vigour, and celestial purity!

Please to enlighten Thy Church throughout the whole habitable world, and particularly in these Islands, with the continued light of Thy countenance. If Thou apply Thy healing hand, we shall presently be whole; nor need we look to any quarter for other remedies than those we have always found to be more powerful than our most obstinate distempers. Bless this City, and this celebrated University. Grant, most gracious Father, that the numbers of youth we send out from it this day, and every year, may, by Thy effectual grace, be consecrated and devoted to Thy service. Forbid, we pray Thee, that they should either be the means of spreading pollution among Thy people, or suffer themselves to be tainted with the infection of a wicked world; but let this fountain of learning be continually enriched with Thy heavenly influences, that it may constantly supply pure and limpid streams for the welfare and improvement of Thy Church and people, to the glory of Thy exalted name, through our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, be honour, praise, and glory, world without end. Amen.

EXHORTATION VIII.

Amidst these amusements, we are unhappily losing a day. Yet, some part of the weight of this complaint is removed when we consider, that, while the greatest part of mankind are bustling in crowds and places of traffic, or, as they would have us believe, in affairs of great importance, we are trifling our time more innocently than they. But what should hinder us from closing this last scene in a serious manner, that is, from turning our eyes to more Divine objects, whereby, though we are fatigued with other matters, we may terminate the work of this day, and the day itself, agreeably; as the beams of the sun use to give more than ordinary delight, when he is near his setting?

You are now initiated into the philosophy, such as it is, that prevails in the schools, and, I imagine, intend, with all possible despatch, to apply to higher studies. But O! how pitiful and scanty are all those things which beset us before, behind, and on every side! The bustling we observe, is nothing but the hurrying of ants eagerly engaged in their little labours. The mind must surely have degenerated, and forgotten its original as effectually as if it had drank of the river Lethe, if, extricating itself out of all these mean concerns and designs, as so many snares laid for it, and rising above the whole of this visible world, it does not return to its Father's bosom, where it may contemplate His eternal beauty, where contemplation will inflame love, and love be crowned with the possession of the beloved object. But, in the contemplation of this glorious object, how great caution and moderation of mind is necessary, that, by prying presumptuously into His secret

councils or His nature, and rashly breaking into the *sanctuary of light**, we be not quite involved in darkness! And, with regard to what the infinite, independent, and necessarily existent Being has thought proper to communicate to us concerning Himself, and we are concerned to know, even that is by no means to be obscured with curious impertinent questions, nor perplexed with the arrogance of disputation; because, by such means, instead of enlarging our knowledge, we are in the fair way to know nothing at all; but readily to be received by humble faith, and entertained with meek and pious affections. And if, in these notices of Him that are communicated to us, we meet with any thing obscure and hard to be understood, such difficulties would be happily got over, not by perplexed controversies, but by constant and fervent prayer. "He will come to understand," says admirably well the famous Bishop of Hippo, [Augustine] "who knocks by prayer; not he who, by quarrelling, makes a noise at the gate of truth †." But what can we, who are mortal creatures, understand with regard to the inexpressible Being we now speak of, especially while we sojourn in these dark prisons of clay, but only this, that we can by no means comprehend Him? For though, in thinking of Him, we remove from our idea all sort of imperfection, and collect together every perceivable perfection, and adorn the whole with the highest titles, we must, after all, acknowledge, that we have said nothing, and that our conceptions are nothing to the purpose. Let us, therefore, in general acknowledge Him to be the Immoveable Being that moveth every thing, the Immutable God that changeth all things at His pleasure, the Infinite and Eternal Fountain of all good and of all existence, and the Lord and sole Ruler of the world.

If you then, my dear youths, aspire to genuine Christianity, that is, the knowledge of God and Divine things, I would have you consider that the mind must first be recalled and engaged to turn in upon itself, before it can be raised up towards God: according to that expression of St. Bernard, "May I return from external things, to those that are within myself, and from these again rise to those that are of a more exalted nature ‡." But the greatest part of men live abroad, and are truly strangers at home: you may sooner find them any where than with themselves. Now, is this not real madness, and the highest degree of insensibility? Yet after all, they seem to have some reason in their madness, when they thus stray away from themselves, since they can see nothing within them, that by its promising aspect can give them pleasure or delight. Every thing there is ugly, frightful, and full of nastiness, which they would rather be ignorant of, than be at the pains to purge away; and therefore prefer a slothful forgetfulness of their misery, to the trouble and labour of regaining happiness. But how preposterous is the most diligent study, and the highest knowledge, when we neglect that of ourselves! The Roman philosopher, ridiculing the grammarians of his time, observes, "that they inquired narrowly into the misfortunes of Ulysses, but were quite

* Εἰς τὰ τοῦ φωτος ἅδυτα.

† Intelliget qui orando pulsat, non qui rixando obstrepit ad ostium veritatis.

‡ Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, ab interioribus ad superiora ascendam.

ignorant of their own *." The sentiments of a wise and pious man are quite different, and I wish you may adopt them. It is his principal care to be thoroughly acquainted with himself; he watches over his own ways, he improves and cultivates his heart as a garden consecrated to the King of kings, who takes particular delight in it; he carefully nurses the heavenly plants and flowers, and roots up all the wild and noxious weeds, that he may be able to say with the greater confidence, *Let my beloved come into his own garden, and be pleased to eat of his fruits.* And when, upon this invitation, the great King, in the fulness of His goodness, descends into the mind, the soul may then easily ascend with Him, as it were, in a chariot of fire, and look down upon the earth, and all earthly things, with contempt and disdain. "Then, rising above the rainy regions, it sees the storms falling beneath its feet, and tramples upon the hidden thunder †."

Let us pray.

WHATEVER satisfaction we look for without Thee, O Heavenly Father, is mere delusion and vanity. Yet, though we have so often experienced this, we have not, to this day, learned to renounce this vain and fruitless labour, that we may depend upon Thee, who alone canst give full and complete satisfaction to the souls of men. We pray, therefore, that, by Thy Almighty hand, Thou wouldst so effectually join and unite our hearts to Thee, that they may never be separated any more. How unhappy are they who forsake Thee, and whose hearts depart from Thy ways! They shall be like shrubs in the desert; they shall not see when good cometh, but dwell in a parched and barren land. Blessed, on the contrary, is he who hath placed his confidence in Thee: he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; he shall not be afraid when heat cometh, nor be uneasy in the time of drought. Take from us, O Lord, whatever earthly enjoyments Thou shalt think proper; there is one thing will abundantly make up all our losses; let Christ dwell in our hearts by faith, and the rays of thy favour continually refresh us in the face of this Thine anointed; in this event, we have nothing to ask, but with grateful minds shall for ever celebrate Thy bounty, and all our bones shall say, Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, who is like unto Thee?

Let Thy Church be glad in Thee, and all in this Nation, and everywhere throughout the world, who regard and love Thy name. By the power and efficacy of the gospel, may their number be daily augmented, and let the gifts of Thy grace be also increased in them all. Bless this University; let it be like a garden watered by Thy heavenly hand, that Thy tender shoots may grow, and in due time produce abundant fruits, to the eternal honour of Thy most glorious name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

* Ulyssis mala explorant, ignorant sua.

† Celsior exurgens pluviis nimbosque cadentes,
Sub pedibus cernens, et cœca tonitrua calcans.

VALEDICTORY ORATION.

THOUGH this, I imagine, is the last address I shall ever have occasion to make to you, I will not detain you long from your studies, nor encroach on the time allowed you for recreation. This is, to be sure, the first time that some of you have heard me; but I have a great many others to bear witness of the constant design of all my dissertations in this place. They will testify, that the intention of all my discourses was, *that the form of sound words*, that is, the Christian doctrine, and consequently the fear and love of God, might not only be impressed, but also engraven upon your hearts in lasting and indelible characters; and that you might not only admit as a truth, but also pay the highest regard to this indisputable maxim, "That piety and religion is the only real good among men*." Moreover, that your minds might be the less encumbered in their application to this grand study of religion, and the more expeditious in their progress therein, I constantly endeavoured, with all possible warmth, to divert you from those barren and thorny questions and disputes that have infected the whole of theology; and this at a time when the greatest part of divines and professors, and those of no small reputation, engaging furiously in such controversies, have split into parties, and unhappily divided the whole world. It was my constant practice to establish those great and uncontroverted articles of our holy religion, which are but few and clear; some part whereof are confirmed by the common consent of nations, and of all the human race; and all the rest, by the unanimous voice of the whole Christian world. Of the first sort are those we have often advanced in treating of the being and perfections of the One Supreme and Eternal principle, and the production of all things by Him; the continual preservation and government of the world by His providence; the law of God given to mankind, and the rewards and punishments annexed to it. The other class of the grand articles of religion, are indeed peculiar to Christian Philosophy, but believed in common by all the professors of that religion. These are the great foundations of our faith, and of all our hope and joy, with regard to the incarnation of the Son of God, his death and resurrection for the destruction of sin, and consequently of death; his ascension into the highest heavens with that same flesh of ours in which he died, and his exaltation there above all ranks of angels, dominions, and thrones, *&c.*; whence we expect he will return in great glory in that day, when he will be glorious in all his saints, and admired in those that believe. As many, therefore, as desire to receive him in this last manifestation, with joy and exultation, must of necessity be holy, and, in conformity to their most perfect and glorious Head,

* Ὅτι ἓν καὶ μόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθὸν ἡ εὐσέβεια.

sober, pious, upright, and live in full contempt of this perishing transitory world, their own mortal flesh, and the sordid pleasures of both: in a word all the enjoyments which the mean and servile admire, they must trample under foot and despise. For, whoever will strive for this victory, and strive so as at last to obtain it, the Lord will own for his servant, and the great Master will acknowledge him for his disciple. He will attain a likeness to God in this earth, and, after a short conflict, will triumph in the Divine presence for ever. These are the doctrines which it is our interest to know, and in the observation of which our happiness will be secured. To these you will turn your thoughts, young gentlemen, if you are wise; nay, to these you ought to give due attention, that you may be wise. Those phantoms we catch at, fly away; this shadow of a life we now live, is likewise on the wing. Those things that are without the verge of sense, and above its reach, are the only solid and lasting enjoyments. "Why are ye fond of these earthly things," says St. Bernard, "which are neither true riches, nor are they yours? If they are yours," continues he, "take them with you*." And Lactantius admirably well observes, that "Whoever prefers the life of the soul, must of necessity despise that of the body; nor can he aspire to the highest good, unless he despise advantages of an inferior kind. For the all-wise God did not choose that we should attain to immortality in a soft indolent way, but that we should gain that inexpressible reward of eternal life, with the highest difficulty and severest labour†." And that you may not be discouraged, remember the great Redeemer of souls, your exalted Captain, hath gone before you, and we have to do with an enemy already conquered. Let us only follow him with courage and activity, and we have no ground to doubt of victory. And indeed it is a victory truly worthy of a Christian, to subdue the barbarous train of our appetites, and subject them to the empire of reason and religion; while on the other hand, it is the most shameful bondage, to have the more Divine part of our composition meanly subjected to an ignoble, earthly body. Now, this victory can only be secured by steadfast believing, vigorous opposition to our spiritual enemies, unwearied watching, and incessant prayer. Let prayer be not only the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts out the night; but let it be also, from morning to night, our staff and stay in all our labours, and enable us to go cheerfully up into the mount of God. Prayer brings consolation to the languishing soul, drives away the devil, and is the great medium whereby all grace and peace is communicated to us. With regard to your reading, let it be your particular care to be familiarly acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures above all other books whatever; for from thence you will truly derive light for your direction, and sacred provisions for your support on your journey. In subordination to these, you may also use the writings of pious men that are agreeable

* Quid terrena hæc amplectimini, quæ nec veræ divitiæ sunt, nec vestræ? Si vestræ sunt, tollite vobiscum.

† Quisquis animæ vitam maluerit, corporis vitam contemnat necesse est, nec aliter aspirare ad summum poterit bonum, nisi quæ sunt ima despexerit. Noluit enim sapientissimus Deus, nos immortalitatem delicate ac molliter assequi, sed ad illud vitæ æternæ inenarrabile præmium summa cum difficultate et magnis laboribus pervenire.

to them, for these also you may improve to your advantage; and particularly that little Book of à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi*, since the sum and substance of religion consists in imitating the Being, that is the object of your worship.

May our dear Redeemer Jesus impress upon your minds a lively representation of his own meek and immaculate heart, that, in that great and last day, he may, by this mark, know you to be his; and, together with all the rest of his sealed and redeemed ones, admit you into the mansions of eternal bliss! Amen.

Let us pray.

Eternal Creator and Supreme Governor of the world, songs of praise are due to Thee in Zion: nay, as Thou art infinitely superior to all our songs and hymns, even silence in Zion redounds to Thy praise. Let the societies of angels be rather employed in singing Thy praises; but let us with silence and astonishment fall down at the footstool of Thy throne, while they are taken up in the repetition of their celebrated doxology, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts*, who fillest the heaven and the earth with Thy glory! But O that we had within us proper powers for exalting that most sacred Name! that name which, according to their measure, is celebrated by all the parts of this visible world which surround us, the heavens, the stars, the winds, the rivers, the earth, the ocean, and all the creatures therein. Thou surely didst at first implant in us souls and powers, for this purpose, superior to the rest of the visible creation: as we were then not only qualified to offer Thee praises founded on the rational conviction of our minds, and animated by the affections of our hearts, but also capable of pronouncing more articulately even the praises that result from all the rest of Thy visible works. But, alas! these heavenly souls, these principles proceeding from a Divine original, we have most deeply immersed in mire and dirt; nor is any hand able to extricate them out of this mud, or cleanse them from their pollution, but Thine. O most exalted and bountiful Father, if Thou wilt graciously please to grant us this grace and favour, we shall then offer thee new songs of praise as incense, and ourselves thus renewed as a burnt offering: and all the rest of our time in this world we shall live, not to ourselves, but wholly to Him who died for us.

May Thy Church throughout the whole earth, and especially in these Islands, be supported by Thy most powerful hand, and continually be made to rejoice in the light of Thy gracious countenance. Let our King be joyful in Thee; as he depends on Thy bounty, let him never be moved; let his throne be established in piety and righteousness, and let peace, and the gospel of peace, be the constant blessings of these kingdoms, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, be praise, honour, and glory, now, and for evermore. Amen.

A

MODEST DEFENCE

OF

MODERATE EPISCOPACY,

AS ESTABLISHED IN SCOTLAND AT THE RESTORATION OF KING CHARLES II.

Episcopal government, managed in conjunction with presbyters, presbyteries, and synods, is not contrary to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive Church, but most agreeable to both.

Yea, it is not contrary to that new Covenant, which is pretended by so many as the main, if not the only, reason of their scrupling; and for their sakes it is necessary to add this: for notwithstanding the many irregularities both in the matter and form of that Covenant, and in the illegal and violent ways of pressing and prosecuting of it, yet, to them who still remain under the conscience of its full force and obligation, and in that some are inconvinceably persuaded, it is certainly most pertinent, if it be true, to declare the consistence of the present government even with that obligation.

And as both of these assertions, I believe, upon the exactest (if impartial and impassionate) inquiry, will be found to be in themselves true, so they are owned by the generality of the Presbyterians in England, as themselves have published their opinions in print, with this title, *Two Papers of proposals, humbly presented to His Majesty, by the reverend ministers of the Presbyterian persuasion.* Printed at London, anno 1661.

Besides other passages in those papers to the same purpose, in page 11 and 12, are these words: "And as these are our general ends and "motives, so we are induced to insist upon the form of a synodical "government, conjunct with a fixed presidency or episcopacy; for "these reasons:

"1. We have reason to believe that no other terms will be so gene-"rally agreed on, *&c.*

"2. It being agreeable to the Scripture and the primitive govern-"ment, is likeliest to be the way of a more universal concord, if ever "the churches on earth arrive at such a blessing: however, it will be "most acceptable to God and well-informed consciences.

"3. It will promote the practice of discipline and godliness without "discord, and promote order without hindering discipline and godli-"ness.

"4. And it is not to be silenced (though in some respects we are

" loth to mention it,) that it will save the nations from the violation " of the solemn vow and covenant, without wronging the church at all, " or breaking any other oath, *&c.*"

And a little after, they add, " That the prelacy disclaimed in that " covenant, was the engrossing the sole power of ordination and juris- " diction, and exercising of the whole discipline, absolutely by bishops " themselves, and their delegates, chancellors, surrogates, and officials, " &c., excluding wholly the pastors of particular churches from all " share in it."

And there is one of prime note amongst them, who, in a large treatise of Church Government, does clearly evidence, that this was the mind both of the Parliament of England, and of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as they themselves did expressly declare it in the admitting of the Covenant, " That they understood it not to be " against all Episcopacy, but only against that particular frame," as it is worded in the article itself*. As for our present model in Scotland, and the way of managing it, whatsoever is amiss, (and it can be no wrong to make that supposition concerning any church on earth,) the brethren that are dissatisfied had possibly better acquitted their duty, by free admonitions and significations of their own sense in all things, than by leaving their stations, which is the only thing that has made the breach, I fear, very hard to cure, and, in human appearance, near to incurable. But there is much charity due to those following their own consciences; and they owe, and I hope they pay, the same back again to those that do the same in another way. And whatsoever may be the readiest and happiest way of reuniting those that are naturally so minded, the Lord reveal it to them in due time.

This one word I shall add. That this difference should arise to a great height, may seem somewhat strange to any man that calmly considers, that there is in this Church no change at all, neither in the doctrine nor worship: no, nor in the substance of the discipline itself. But when it falls on matter easily inflammable, a little spark how great a fire will it kindle!

Oh! who would not long for the shadows of the evening, from all these poor childish contests!

But some will say, that we are engaged against Prelacy by covenant, and therefore cannot yield to so much as you do, without perjury.

Ans. That this is wholly untrue I thus demonstrate. I. When that Covenant was presented to the Assembly with the bare name of Prelacy joined to Popery, many contrary and reverend divines desired that the word (Prelacy) might be explained, because it was not all Episcopacy they were against; and thereupon the following clause, in the parenthesis, was given by way of explication, in these words: [That the church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, and commissaries, deans, and chapters, arch-deacons, and all the other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy.] By which it appears,

* Baxter of Church Government, P. III. C. 1. tit. page 275. " An Episcopacy desirable for the reformation, preservation, and peace of the churches, a fixed president, *durante vita*." See p. 297, and 330, ibid.

that it was only the English hierarchy or frame, that was covenanted against; and that which was then existent, that was taken down.

II. When the House of Lords took the Covenant, Mr. Thomas Coleman, that gave it them, did so explain it, and profess that it was not their intent to covenant against all Episcopacy; and upon this explication it was taken; and certainly the Parliament was most capable of giving the due sense of it, seeing it was they that did impose it.

III. And it could not be all Episcopacy that was excluded, because a parochial Episcopacy was at that same time used and approved commonly in England.

IV. And in Scotland they had used the help of visitors, for the reformation of their churches, committing the care of a country or circuit to some one man, which was as high a sort of Episcopacy at least as any I am pleading for: besides that they had moderators in all their synods, which were temporary bishops.

V. Also, the chief divines of the late Assembly at Westminster, that recommended that Covenant to the nations, have professed their own judgment for such a moderate Episcopacy as I am here defending, and therefore they never intended the exclusion of this by covenant.

After the same author saith, As we have Prelacy to be aware of, so, we have the contrary extreme to avoid; and the church's peace, if it may be so procured; and as we must not take down the ministry lest it prepare men for Episcopacy, so neither must we be against any profitable use and exercise of the ministry, or desirable order amongst them, for fear of introducing Prelacy, &c.

There is another that has wrote a treatise on purpose, and that zealous enough, concerning the obligation of the League and Covenant, under the name of Theophilus Timereus, and yet therein it is expressly asserted, That however at first view it might appear, that the Parliament had renounced all Episcopacy, yet, upon exacter inquiry, it was evident to the author that that very scruple was made by some members in Parliament, and resolved, with the consent of their brethren in Scotland, that the Covenant was only intended against Prelacy as it was then in being in England, leaving a latitude for Episcopacy, &c.

It would be noted, that when that Covenant was framed, there was no Episcopacy at all in being in Scotland, but in England only; so that the extirpation of that frame only could then be merely intended.

Likewise, it would be considered of, though there is in Scotland at present the name of dean and chapter and commissaries, yet, that none of these do exercise at all any part of the discipline under that name, neither any other, as chancellor or surrogate, &c., by delegation from bishops, with total exclusion of the community of presbyters from all power and share in it; which is the greatest point of difference between that model and this with us, and imports so much as to the main of discipline.

I do not deny that the generality of the people, even of ministers in Scotland, when they took the Covenant, did understand that article as against all Episcopacy whatsoever, even the most moderate: especially if it should be restored under the express name of bishops and archbishops; never considering how different the nature and model, and way of exercising it, might be thought on under these

names, and that the due regulating of the thing is much more to be regarded than either the returning or altering the name. But though they did not then consider any such thing, yet certainly it concerns them now to consider it, when it is represented to them, that not only the words of the oath itself do very genuinely consist with such a qualified and distinctive sense, but that the very composers and imposers of it, or a considerable part of them, did so understand and intend it. And unless they can make it appear that the Episcopacy now in question with us in Scotland, is either contrary to the word of God, or to that mitigated sense of their own oath, it would seem more suitable to Christian charity and moderation, rather to yield to it, as tolerable at least, than to continue so inflexibly to their first mistakes, and excessive zeal for love of it, as to divide from the Church, and break the bond of peace.

It may likewise be granted, that some learned men in England, who have refused to take the Covenant, did possibly except against that article of it as signifying the total renunciation and abolition of Episcopacy, and seeing that it was the real event and consequence of it, and they having many other strong and weighty reasons for refusing it, it is no wonder that they were little curious to inquire what passed amongst the contrivers of it, and what distinction, or different senses, either the words of that article might admit, or those contrivers might intend by them.

And the truth is, that, besides many other evils, the iniquity and unhappiness of such oaths and covenants lie much in this, that being commonly framed by persons that, even amongst themselves, are not fully of one mind, but have their different opinions and interests to serve, (and it was so even in this,) they commonly patch up so many several articles and clauses, and those, too, of so versatile and ambiguous terms, that they prove most wretched snares and thickets of briars and thorns to the consciences of those who are engaged in them, and matter of endless contentions and disputes amongst them, about the true sense and intendment, and the ties and obligations of those doubtful clauses: especially in such alterations and revolutions of affairs as always may, and often do, even within few years, follow after them; for the models and productions of such devices are not usually long-lived. And whatsoever may be said for their excuse in whole or in part, who, in yielding to the power that pressed it, and the general opinion of this Church at that time, did take that Covenant in the most moderate and least schismatical sense that the terms can admit; yet, I know not what can be said to clear them of a very great sin, that not only framed such an engine, but violently imposed it upon all ranks of men; not ministers and others public persons only, but the whole body and community, to such a hodge-podge of things of various concernments, religious and civil, as church discipline and government, the privileges of parliaments, and liberties of subjects, and condign punishment of malignants,—things hard enough for the wisest and learnedest to draw the just lines of, and to give plain definitions and decisions of them, and therefore certainly as far off from the reach of poor country people's understanding, as from the true interest of their

souls. And yet to tie them by a religious oath, either to know all, or to contend for them blindfold, without knowing of them, where will there be instanced a greater oppression and tyranny over consciences than this? Certainly, they that now govern in this Church, cannot be charged with any thing near or like unto it; for whatsoever they require of intrants to the ministry, they require neither subscriptions nor oaths of ministers already entered, and far less of the whole body of the people. And it were ingenuously done, to take some notice of any point of moderation, or whatsoever else is really commendable, even in those we account our greatest enemies, and not to take any party in the world for the absolute standard and unfailing rule of truth and righteousness in all things.

A FRAGMENT ON EZRA IX.

Our joys and griefs are the pulse of our hearts, and tell the temper of them. Earthly joy and sorrow take deep with an earthly heart, but little affect that which is spiritual and heavenly; and in this, those prayers and griefs are strong that arise from spiritual causes, which most of men scarcely feel at all: yea, a holy heart stays not in its own interest, in its mourning or rejoicing, but hath more sense even of other men's sins, than commonly they themselves who are guilty. *Rivers of waters*, says David, *run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy Law.* Psal. cxix. 136. Of this same temper was this holy man. Oh! how would a few, how would one such person in a congregation, advance the work of a public fast, more than hundreds of us! And such an one's silence speaks more than all our noises; his *sitting astonished till the evening sacrifice.* Little, shallow griefs find the tongue more readily, but the greater are not of so easy vent, but stop a while though pressing to be out, as a full vessel with a narrow mouth. It was so with Ezra's sorrow for the people's sin; but when it gets out, it springs upward with the greater force, even up to heaven. *I fell on my knees, and spread out my hands to the Lord my God, and said*, Oh! my God, *I am ashamed, our iniquities are increased over our heads*:—q. d., These cover me with shame, and I blush to lift up my face to those heavens whither our iniquities are gone up before: when I would look to thee, I spy our horrible transgressions got thither first, and mutiny of the people, thereby engaging such droves of poor ignorant persons to they knew not what, and (to speak freely) standing before Thee and accusing us. *Our transgression is grown up to heaven.* It hath had a long time time to grow in, and all that time hath been incessantly growing, and therefore grown so high. *Since the days of our fathers we have been in this trespass.* Generations

pass, but yet your sins abide. When the succeeding generation follows on in it, the former sins are reserved, and the latter added to them, and so they are kept alive. Thus they *grow*. This fills up the measure, and ripens a people for judgment, that is filling and growing all the while suitable to the sin, till it be poured out. Hence, public calamities and long-lasting judgments on people.

Now these two things aggravate: great judgments inflicted, and great deliverances granted. Yet after both, this people had forsaken God's commandments. *And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this.* Is not this just our case? Have we not been sharply scourged, though indeed far less than our iniqnites, and have we not been seasonably and wonderfully delivered in our extremities? And yet have we not again broken His commandments? And do we not still generally and grossly continue so doing! Oh! what shall we say to our God? *We cannot stand before Him, because of this.* Let us, therefore, fall down before Him, and confess, and supplicate; and there is yet hope that He will be gracious.

CHARGES

TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF DUNBLANE.

I. *Bishop Leighton's Charge to his Clergy, Sept.* 1662.

FOR DISCIPLINE.

First, That all diligence be used for the repressing of profaneness, and for the advancement of solid piety.

Secondly, That not only scandals of unchastity, but drunkenness, swearing, cursing, filthy speaking, and mocking of religion, and all other gross offences, be brought under church censure.

Thirdly, That scandalous offenders be not absolved, till there appear in them very probable signs of true repentance.

Fourthly, That inquiry be made by the minister, not only into the knowledge, but the practice and track of life, of those who are to be admitted to the holy communion; and all profane and evidently impenitent persons be secluded, till their better conversation, and obedience to the gospel, be more apparent.

Fifthly, That family prayer be inquired after; and they that can, be exhorted to join with it reading of the Scriptures.

FOR WORSHIP.

First, That instead of lecturing and preaching both at one meeting, larger portions of the Holy Scriptures, one whole chapter at least of each Testament, and Psalms withal, be constantly read; and this not as a by-work, while they are convening, but after the people are well convened, and the worship solemnly begun with confession of sins and prayer, either by the minister or some fit person by him appointed.

Secondly, That the Lord's Prayer be restored to more frequent use; likewise, the Doxology and the Creed.

Thirdly, That daily public prayer, in churches, morning and evening, with reading of the Scriptures, be used, where it can be had conveniently, and the people be exhorted to frequent them; not so as to think that this should excuse them from daily private prayer, in their families and in secret, but rather as a help to enable them and dispose them the more for both these: and let the constant use of secret prayer be recommended to all persons, as the great instrument of sanctifying the soul, and of entertaining and increasing it in the love of God.

Fourthly, That the younger sort and the ignorant be diligently catechised, at fit times, all the year through; and that work not wholly

laid over on some days or weeks before the celebration of the communion; but that the inquiry at that time, be rather of their good conversation, and due disposition for partaking of that holy ordinance, as was said before in an article touching discipline.

Fifthly, That ministers use some short form of catechism, such as they may require account of, till a common form be agreed on.

Sixthly, That preaching be plain and useful for all capacities; not entangled with useless questions and disputes, nor continued to a wearisome length; the great and most necessary principles of religion, most frequently treated upon: and oftentime larger portions of Scripture explained, and suitable instructions and exhortations thence deduced; and let that be the sermon at that time; which will doubtless be as truly preaching, and as useful, if not more so, than insisting, for a whole sermon or more, upon one short verse or sentence.

The Bishop propounded to the Brethren, that it was to be remembered, by himself and them both, to how eminent degrees of purity of heart and life their holy calling doth engage them; to how great contempt of this present world, and inflamed affections toward Heaven, springing from deep persuasions within them of those things they preach to others, and from the daily meditation of them, and fervent prayer: And that they consider how ill it becomes them to be much in the trivial conversation of the world; but, when their duty or necessity involves them in company, that their speech and deportment be exemplarily holy, ministering grace to those with whom they converse: And, (to add but this one thing, so suitable to ministers of the gospel of peace,) that they be meek and gentle and lovers and exhorters of peace, private and public, amongst all ranks of men; endeavouring rather to quench, than to increase, the useless debates and contentions that abound in the world; and that they be always more studious of pacific than polemic divinity, that certainly being much diviner than this, for the students of it are called the *sons of God*. Matt. v. 9.

II. *The Bishop's Address after the business was over, October* 1665.

After the affairs of the Synod were ended, the Bishop shewed the Brethren he had somewhat to impart to them that concerned himself, which, though it imported little or nothing, either to them or the church, yet he judged it his duty to acquaint them with; and it was, the resolution he had taken of retiring from this public charge; and that all the account he could give of the reasons moving him to it, was briefly this: the sense he had of his own unworthiness of so high a station in the church, and his weariness of the contentions of this church, which seemed rather to be growing than abating, and, by their growth, did make so great abatements of that Christian meekness and mutual charity, that is so much more worth than the whole sum of all that we contend about. He thanked the brethren for all their undeserved respect and kindness manifested to himself all along; and desired their good construction of the poor endeavours he had used to serve them, and to assist them in promoting the work of the ministry, and the great designs of the gospel, in their bounds: and if, in any thing, in word or deed, he had offended them, or any of them, he very

earnestly and humbly craved their pardon: and having recommended to them to continue in the study of peace and holiness, and of ardent love to our great Lord and Master, and to the souls he hath so dearly bought, he closed with these words of the Apostle: "Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, and live in peace; and the God of peace and love shall be with you."

III. *The Bishop's Charge, October* 1666.

1. It was enacted, That all the ministers do endeavour to bring their people to a high esteem of the Holy Scriptures, and of the reading of them in public; and to give evidence thereof, by reverent and attentive hearing, none being permitted to stand about the doors, or lie in the kirk-yard, during the time of reading; and if, after warning given them of this, any shall be found to continue in the same disorder, they are, by due rebukes and censures, to be brought to obedience.

2. That the ministers be careful to direct the readers what parts of the Scriptures are most frequently to be read: as, the histories of the Gospel, and the Epistles; and of the Old Testament, the most intelligible and practicable parts, particularly, large portions of the Psalms at all times, being both so excellently instructive, and withal so divine forms of prayers and praises, and therefore have been so much used by the Christian churches in all ages, and always made so great a part of their public service.

3. That no readers be permitted, but such as are tried and approved by the Presbytery.

4. That, besides the reading betwixt the second and third bell, which is but as in the interval for those that are come, till the rest do convene, some part of the Scriptures be read after the last bell is rung out, and the congregation more fully met, and the minister is come in; either by himself, or by the reader at his appointment; one chapter at least, together with some of the Psalms, one or more, as they are of length, and of which some part afterwards may be sung, and so the people shall the better understand what they sing. Thus shall this so useful ordinance of public reading of the Scriptures be performed with more solemnity, and brought into greater respect and veneration, and the people be more universally and plentifully edified by it. But, together with this, the reciting of the Ten Commandments, the Belief, according to the acts of former Synods, is no Lord's day to be omitted. Nor is this only or mainly meant as a help to the people's learning the words of them, and so being able to repeat them, but as a solemn publication of the law of God, as the rule of our life, and a solemn profession of our believing the articles of our Christian faith, and for the quickening of our affections towards both.

And as to that exercise of reading the Scriptures, it cannot be imagined that any well-instructed and solid-minded Christian can question the great expediency and usefulness of it for all ranks of people: for, besides that many of our commons cannot read, and so, cannot use the Scriptures in private, and too many that can, yet do neglect it; even they that use them most in private, will not only no

whit the less, but so much the more, be well satisfied and edified with hearing them read in public, and will more reverently and religiously attend to them, and, with the blessing of God upon them so doing, not fail to find (what others can say they have often found) divers passages and sentences falling frequently in upon their hearts in public reading, with particular warmth and divine force, nothing below, if not sometimes beyond, what they usually find in private.

If the minister think fit to make his sermon for the time, upon some part of what, by himself, or by his appointment, hath been read, it may do well; and possibly so much the better, the longer the text be, and the shorter the sermon be; for, it is greatly to be suspected, that our usual way of very short texts, and very long sermons, is apt to weary people more, and profit them less.

But, whatsoever they do in this, they should beware of returning to their long expositions, besides their sermon, at one and the same meeting; which, besides the tediousness and other inconveniences, is apt to foment in people's minds the foolish prejudice and proud disdain they have taken against the Scriptures read without a superadded discourse; in which conceit, for all their zeal against Popery, they seem to be too much of the Romish opinion, as accounting the Holy Scriptures so obscure in themselves, that it is someway dangerous, or at least altogether unprofitable, to intrust the common people either with reading or hearing any part of them at any time, unless they be backed with continual expositions.

5. That ministers do endeavour to reduce the people from the irreverent deportment they have generally contracted in the public worship; particularly, from their most indecent sitting at prayer, to kneel or stand, as conveniently they may, that we may worship, both with our bodies and with our souls, Him that made both, and made them for that very end. Oh! how needful is that invitatory to be often rung in our ears, that seem wholly to have forgot it. "Oh! come, and let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker."

6. That people be frequently and earnestly exhorted to morning and evening prayer in their families, especially the prime families in parishes, as most exemplary.

7. That the way of catechising be more adapted to the capacity of our rude and ignorant people; and that our sermons, particularly those of the afternoon, may be more frequently bestowed on the most plain and intelligible way of explaining some point of catechetical doctrine.

8. It was recommended, That convenient utensils be provided in every kirk, for the administration of the holy sacraments.

9. That, according to our great and standing duty, we be still more and more zealous and careful, by doctrine and discipline, to purge out all profaneness; particularly, the most common and crying sins, as drunkenness, cursing, swearing, railing, and bitter speaking, and rotten filthy speaking, so usual amongst the common sort, in their house or field labour together, particularly in harvest: and that it be by all ministers recommended to the owners of the crops, and overseers of the reapers, to range them so to their work, and in such divisions, as may give least occasion to any thing of that kind.

10. That, as we ourselves should be exemplary in holiness, we should endeavour that our *seniores plebis*, or elders of the people, be so too: and, for that end, rather to have them well chosen, though fewer, than a great number of such as too often they are.

11. That the Presbyteries do inquire of each one of their number concerning the celebration of the communion, that at least our usual returns of it be neglected by none; for, it is one of the great defects and reproaches of our Church, that that great ordinance, being so useful for the increase of holiness, should be so seldom administered, as with us it is, even where it is oftenest. For the way of examination in order to it, somewhat is set down in our first Synod, which may be looked at, if possibly it may prove to be of any use.

IV. *Paper given in by the Bishop to the Synod, April* 1667.

I CONFESS that my own inactive and unmeddling temper may be too apt to prevail against the known duty of my station, and may incline me rather to inquire too little than too much into the deportment of others; and rather to be deficient, than to exceed in admonitions and advices to my brethren, in matters of their duty: and, besides this natural aversion, the sense of my own great unworthiness and filthiness, may give me check, and be a very strong curb upon me, in censuring others for what may be amiss, or in offering any rules for the redress of it. And there is yet another consideration, that bends still further that way; for I am so desirous to keep far off from the reach of that prejudice that abounds in these parts, against the very name of my sacred function, as apt to command and domineer too much, that I may possibly err on the other hand, and scarce perform the duty of the lowest and most moderate kind of moderator; so that I am forced to spur and drive up myself against all these retardments, to suggest any thing, how useful soever, beyond our road or accustomed way, especially, finding how little any thing of that kind takes, and prevails to any real effect.

However, when any thing appears to me of evident reason and usefulness, and that easily joins in, and paceth with, our standing customs, I judge it my duty to offer it to you; and I hope, if that ye shall find it of any use, ye will not reject it, but rather improve it to somewhat better, that by occasion of it may arise in your own thoughts.

Something of this kind I have formerly moved, concerning the way of dealing with persons fallen into scandalous sin: frequent speaking with them in private, to the convincing and awakening their consciences to a lively sense of sin, and directing them in the exercises of repentance, and exhorting them to set apart some time for the solid humbling of their souls in fasting and prayer; and not to admit them to public confession, until they have, to our best discerning, some real heart-sense of sin, and remorse for it, and serious purposes of newness of life.

Likewise, I suggested somewhat touching the way of examining of all persons, toward their admission to the holy communion, besides the ordinary way of catechising the younger and more ignorant sort; and some other particulars much like these, that now I will not repeat.

That which I would recommend at this time, relates to the business of *privy trials* (as they are called) of ministers in their Presbyteries, toward the time of the Synod; in which I have perceived, in some places, (if I may be pardoned that free word,) very much of superficial, empty form; for the help of which, besides other ways which may be thought on, that which occurs to me at present, is this: That some certain questions be asked of every minister before he withdraws; and these be much the same with those that usually are, or fitly may be, propounded to the elders and people concerning their minister, at the visitation of particular kirks. For though, in the case we now speak of, we can have nothing but every man's own word concerning himself, yet this does not render it an useless thing; for, besides that divers of the questions will be of things so obvious to public knowledge, that no man will readily adventure to give an untrue answer, where it may be so readily traced, there is much to be given to the presumed ingenuity and veracity of a minister, especially in what is solemnly and punctually inquired of him; and whatsoever, formerly, hath been, or hath not been, his former degree of diligence in the particulars, the very inquiry and asking concerning them, will be apt to awake, in every man, a more serious reflection upon himself touching each point; and the drawing forth such an express answer to each before his brethren, will probably excite and engage him to higher exactness in all of them for the time to come.

The particulars I conceive may be these, and such others, like them, as may be further thought fit.

1. Whether he be constantly assiduous in plain and profitable preaching, instructing, and exhorting, and reproving, most expressly and frequently, those sins that abound most among his people; and in all things, to his best skill, fitting his doctrine to the capacities, necessities, and edification of all sorts within his charge?

2. Whether he be diligent in catechising, employing throughout the year such seasons and times for it, as may be easiest and fittest for the people to attend it, and not wholly casting it over upon some few days or weeks near the time of the communion?

3. How often in the year he celebrates the holy communion? For I am ashamed to say, whether, at least, once every year?

4. Whether he does faithfully and impartially exercise discipline, and bring all known scandals to due censure; and does speak privately, and that oftener than once, with the persons convicted, and admits them not to public acknowledgment, till he sees in them some probable signs of true repentance.

5. Whether he be diligent, by himself and his elders, in all convenient ways, to know the deportment of the several families and persons of his flock; and do frequently visit the families, and not only ask, but do his best certainly to inform himself, whether they constantly use morning and evening prayer, together with reading of the Scriptures, if they have any that can do it; and whether this point of family exercise be specially provided for in the choice families in the parish.

6. Whether he be careful of the relief of the poor, and of visiting the sick, whensoever he knows of any, even though they neglect to send for him; and for this end make inquiry, and the rather prevent

their sending, because they commonly defer that, till it can be of little or no use to them.

7. Whether he does in private plainly and freely admonish those he knows, or hath cause to suspect, to be given to uncleanness, or drunkenness, or swearing, or any kind of inordinate walking, especially if they be of that quality that engages him frequently to converse with them; and if they continue such, leaves off that converse; and if their miscarriage be public, brings them to public censure.

8. Whether he watches exactly over his own conversation in all things, that he not only give no offence, but be an example to the flock, and preach by living.

9. Whether he spend the greatest portions of his time in private, in reading, and prayer, and meditation,—a thing so necessary to enable him for all the other parts of his duty.

10. Whether he makes it the great business, and withal the great pleasure, of his life, to fulfil the work of his ministry, in the several parts and duties of it, out of love to God, and to the souls of his people.

11. If he does not only avoid gross offences, (which, in a guide of souls, were intolerable,) but studies daily to mortify pride, and rash anger, and vain-glory, and covetousness, and love of this world and of sensual pleasures, and self-love, and all inordinate passions and affections, even in those instances wherein they are subtilest and least discernible by others, and commonly too little discerned by ourselves.

12. If he not only lives in peace with his brethren and flock, and withal as much as is possible, but is an ardent lover and promoter of it, reconciling differences, and preserving good agreement, all he can, amongst his people.

It hath not escaped my thoughts, that some of these questions, being of things more inward, may seem less fit to be publicly propounded to any; and that the best observers of them will, both out of modesty, and real humility, and severe judging of themselves, be aptest to charge themselves with deficiency in them, and will only own, at most, sincere desires and endeavour, which, likewise, they that practise and mind them least, may in general profess: neither is there any more particular and punctual account to be expected of such things of any man in public; but the main intent in these, (as was said before,) is, serious reflection, and that each of us may be stirred up to ask ourselves over again these and more of the like questions, in our most private trials, and our secret scrutinies of our own hearts and lives, and may redouble our diligence in purging ourselves; that we may be in the house of God vessels of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared to every good work. And, for those other things more exposed to the knowledge of others, if any brother hears of any faultiness in any of the number, he shall not do well to think rudely to vent it in the meeting, till first he have made all due inquiry after the truth of it; yea, though he hath it upon inquiry to be true, yet ought he not, even then, to make his first essay of rectifying his brother, by a declaration to the full meeting, without having formerly admonished him, first alone, and then (according to our Saviour's rule) in the presence of one or two more;

but having done so, if neither of these reclaim him, then follows of necessity to tell the church; but that is likewise to be done with great singleness of heart, and charity, and compassion; and the whole procedure of the whole company, with the person so delated, is to be managed with the same temper, according to the excellent advice of the Apostle, "My brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. vi. 2.

V. *Paper given in by the Bishop to the Synod, October* 1667, *containing Proposals touching the following things:*

1. Solemn reading of the Scriptures.
2. Reducing the people to a reverend gesture in prayer.
3. Plain and practical, and catechetical, preaching.
4. A weekly day for catechising, and the reading of the Scriptures joined with it.
5. A short and plain form of catechism.
6. A more exact and spiritual way of dealing with public penitents.
7. As likewise of preparing people for the communion; more frequent celebration whereof is so much to be wished, but so little, or scarce at all, to be hoped in this Church.
8. That, in preaching, the most abounding and crying sins be more sharply and frequently reproved, particularly, cursing and swearing; and the worship of God in families more urged.
9. The due educating and moulding the minds of young students in presbyteries.
13. More frequent and more exact visitation of churches: and the visiting of families by each minister in his own charge.

The words of the Paper were as follow:—

1. That the reading of the Holy Scriptures in our public meetings, when they are solemnest and fullest, be constantly used, and that we endeavour to bring our people to a reverend and affectionate esteem of that ordinance, and attention to it.

2. That both by our own example, and by frequent instruction and exhortation, we study to reform that extreme irreverence and indecency that hath generally prevailed in people's deportment in time of public worship, and particularly of prayer: and that they be reduced to such a gesture, as may signify that we are acknowledging and adoring the great Majesty of God.

3. That we endeavour to adapt our way of preaching, with all evidence and plainness, to the informing of the people's minds, and quickening their affections, and raising in them renewed purposes of a Christian life; and that some part of our sermons be designed for the plain and practical explication of the great principles of religion.

4. That we fix some certain times, at least one day in the week, throughout the year, for catechising, and that withal, there be reading of the Scriptures and prayer at the same time; to which, besides that part of the people that are for each time particularly warned to be present, those others that are near the church, and at leisure may resort. For the work of the

ministry is a husbandry of more continual labour and attendance than that of our country people that labour the ground, and therefore cannot well be duly discharged if it be wholly cast over upon the Lord's day, without ever meeting with them, or bringing any considerable part of them together, all the week long.

5. It seems absolutely necessary, that each minister should resolve on some short and plain form of catechism, for the use of his people: for it is not, I think, to be imagined, that ever people will have any fixed knowledge of the articles of religion, by lax and continually varied discourses and forms, or by catechisms too long and too hard for them. And would some person draw up several short forms, they might be revised at the next Synod, and possibly one framed out of them, which, by consent, might be appointed for the use of this diocese, for the interim, till one shall be published for the whole church.

6. That which hath been formerly proposed, should be reminded, of a more exact and spiritual way of dealing with public offenders, that their reception might be both more apt to recover the penitents themselves, and to edify the church.

7. For more frequent communion, (if it could be had,) or however, for the better improving it when we have it, seldom as it is, what hath been formerly suggested touching the way of examining and preparing people to it, and other particulars relating thereto, need not be repeated, but need very much to be really practised, if they can be of any use.

8. Likewise, enough hath been formerly said, (it were well if any thing might once appear to be done,) touching the worship of God in families, especially the prime ones within our bounds: as likewise touching the exercise of discipline for the repressing of swearing and drunkenness, and all profaneness, so much abounding every where; and that our doctrine be likewise more particularly and frequently applied to that purpose.

9. Something hath likewise been said concerning the training up of such young men amongst us as intend the ministry, not only as to their strain of preaching, but the moulding of their minds to more inward thoughts, and the study of a devout life, and more acquaintance with the exercises of mortification and purging of their own hearts by those Divine truths which they are to preach to others for the same purpose: for how shall they teach what they have not learned?

10. That churches be more frequently and exactly visited, and, by each minister, the families of his congregation.

This paper being publicly read, and consented to, and approved by the unanimous vote of the Synod, conformably to it was framed the following act.

The Bishop and Synod having seriously considered the height of profaneness and gross sins abounding among their people, particularly drunkenness and uncleanness, and most universally the heinous sin of cursing and swearing, and that which foments and increases those and all sins, the great contempt of the Lord's holy day and ordinances, and the gross and almost incredible ignorance of the com-

mon sort, under so much assiduous preaching and catechising; for the more effectual redress of all these evils, have agreed and resolved, through the Lord's help, each one within himself, to stir the grace and zeal of God that is within him, to renewed vigour and fervour, and more earnest endeavours in the use of all due means for that effect; and particularly,

1. The applying of their sermons and doctrines more expressly and frequently to the reproof of those wickednesses, especially of that horrible sin which almost all ranks of men do more easily and frequently commit than they can possibly do other gross sins, and that with less sense and remorse—cursing and swearing: And that they will, by God's assistance, not only use short and frequent reproofs of this and other sins, but at some times more largely insist in representing the exceeding sinfulness and vileness of such a particular sin, and the great danger of the Lord's wrath and heaviest judgements upon those that persist in it.

2. That with this they will join constant private inspection over the lives of their people, and, by all due means, particularly inquire into them; and when they find any one guilty of any gross sin, privately to admonish him, meekly and affectionately, but yet with all freedom and plainness; and if upon that they mend not, to proceed in the regular way of discipline and censure within their own charge; and if they be not by that reclaimed, but prove obstinate, then to delate them to the highest judicature, in the usual order of this Church.

3. To use more frequent catechising, and that in so plain a method and way as may be most apt both to inform the minds of the most ignorant, and, through the blessing of God, to make more deep impression upon their hearts.

4. That, as much as is competent for ministers, they will endeavour to procure the executing of those penal laws made against cursing and swearing, and other scandalous offences, in such a way as may be most convenient and feasible in each of their respective parishes.

5. That they will endeavour, both by exhortation and, where need is, by use of discipline, to bring their people to more careful and constant attendance on all the ordinances of God at all times of the accustomed public meetings, and to a more religious and reverend deportment in them throughout the whole, but particularly in time of prayer.

6. That they be particularly careful to inquire after the daily performance of the worship of God in families, and, where they find it wanting, to enjoin it, and make inquiry again after it; and this should be especially provided for in the choice and most eminent families in the several congregations, as exemplary to all the rest.

VI. *Concluding Paragraph, April* 1668.

The Bishop, having commended the Brethren for their unity, and concord, and good conversation, exhorted them to continue therein, and to be more and more exemplary in holiness, and in modesty and gravity, even in the externals of their hair and habit, and their whole deportment; and to the regulating of their children, and their whole

families, to be patterns of religion and sobriety to all about them; and that they themselves aspire daily to greater abstraction from the world, and contempt of things below; giving themselves wholly to their great work of watching over souls, for which they must give account; and to reading and meditation; and to prayer, that draws continual fresh supplies from Heaven, to enable them for all these duties.

VII. *Paragraph respecting Baptismal Vows, October* 1668.

That which had been sometimes spoke of before, the Bishop now again recommended to the Brethren, that, at their set times of catechising and examining their people, they would take particular notice of young persons, towards their first admission to the holy communion; and, having before taken account of their knowledge of the grounds of religion, would then cause them, each one particularly and expressly, to declare their belief of the Christian faith, into which, in their infancy, they were baptized; and, reminding them of that their baptismal vow, and the great engagements it lays upon them to a holy and Christian life, would require of them an explicit owning of that vow and engagement, and their solemn promise accordingly, to endeavour the observing and performance of it, in the whole course of their following life: And then, in their prayer with which they use to conclude those meetings, would recommend the said young persons, now thus engaged, to the effectual blessing of God, beseeching Him to own them for His, and to bestow on them the sanctifying and strengthening grace of His Holy Spirit, as His signature upon them, sealing them to the day of redemption.

And this practice, as it hath nothing in it that can offend any, even the most scrupulous minds, so it may be a very fit suppletory of that defect in Infant Baptism, which the enemies of it do mainly object against it, and may, through the blessing of God, make a lasting impression of religion upon the hearts of those young persons towards whom it is used, and effectually engage them to a Christian life; and, if they swerve from it, make them the more inexcusable and clearly convincible of their unfaithfulness and breach of that great promise and sacred vow, they have so renewed to God before His people. And for authority of divines, if we regard it, it hath the general approbation of the most famous Reformers, and of the most pious and learned that have followed them since their time; and, being performed in that evangelical simplicity as it is here propounded, they do not only allow it as lawful, but desire it, and advise it as laudable and profitable, and of very good use, in all Christian churches.

RULES AND INSTRUCTIONS

FOR A

HOLY LIFE.

For disposing you the better to observe these rules, and profit by them, be pleased to take the following advices:—

1. Put all your trust in the special and singular mercy of God, that He for His mercy's sake, and of His only goodness, will help and bring you to perfection. Not that absolute perfection is attainable here, but the meaning is, to high degrees of that spiritual and divine life, which is always growing and tending towards the absolute perfection above; but in some persons comes nearer to that and riseth higher, even here, than in the most. If you with hearty and fervent desires do continually wish and long for it, and with most humble devotion daily pray unto God, and call for it, and with all diligence do busily labour and travail to come to it, undoubtedly it shall be given you. For you must not think it sufficient to use exercises, as though they had such virtues in them, that, of themselves alone, they could make such as do use them perfect; for neither those nor any other, whatever they be, can of themselves (by their use only) bring unto perfection. But our merciful Lord God, of His own goodness, when you seek with hearty desires and fervent sighings, maketh you to find it. When you ask daily with devout prayer, then He giveth it to you; and when you continually, with unwearied labour and travail, knock perseveringly, then He doth mercifully open unto you. And because those exercises do teach you to seek, ask, and knock, yea, they are none other than very devout petitions, seekings, and spiritual pulsations for the merciful help of God; therefore they are very profitable means to come to perfection by God's grace.

2. Let no particular exercise hinder your public and standing duties to God and your neighbours: but for these, rather intermit the other for a time, and then return to it as soon as you can.

3. If, in time of your spiritual exercise, you find yourself drawn to any better, or to as good a contemplation as that is, follow the track of that good motion so long as it shall last.

4. Always take care to follow such exercises of devout thoughts, withal putting in practice such lessons as they contain and excite to.

5. Though at first ye feel no sweetness in such exercises, yet be not discouraged, nor induced to leave them, but continue in them faithfully, whatsoever pain or spiritual trouble ye feel; for, doing them for God and His honour, and finding none other present fruit, yet you shall have an excellent reward for your diligent labour and your pure intentions. And let not your falling short of these models and rules, nor your daily manifold imperfections and faults, dishearten you; but continue steadfast in your desires, purposes, and endeavours; and

ever ask the best, aim at the best, and hope the best, being sorry that you can do no better; and they shall be a most acceptable sacrifice in the sight of God, *and in due time you shall reap if you faint not.* And of all such instructions let your rule be, to follow them as much as you can; but not too scrupulously thinking your labour lost if you do not exactly and strictly answer them in everything. Purpose still better, and by God's grace all shall be well.

SECTION I.

Rule 1. Exercise thyself in the knowledge and deep consideration of our Lord God, calling humbly to mind how excellent and incomprehensible He is; and this knowledge shalt thou rather endeavour to obtain by fervent desire and devout prayer, than by high study and outward labour. It is the singular gift of God, and certainly very precarious.

2. Pray, then, " Most gracious Lord, whom to know is the very " bliss and felicity of man's soul, and yet none can know Thee, unless " Thou wilt open and shew Thyself unto him; vouchsafe, of Thy infi- " nite mercy now and ever, to enlighten my heart and mind to know " Thee, and Thy most holy and perfect will, to the honour and glory " of Thy name. Amen."

3. Then lift up thy heart to consider (not with too great violence, but soberly) the eternal and infinite power of God, who has created all things by His excellent wisdom; His unmeasurable goodness, and incomprehensible love: for He is very and only God, most excellent, most high, most glorious, the everlasting and unchangeable goodness, an eternal substance, a charity infinite, so excellent and ineffable in Himself, that all dignity, perfection, and goodness, that is possible to be spoken or thought of, cannot sufficiently express the smallest part thereof.

4. Consider that He is the natural place, the centre and rest of thy soul. If thou then think of the most blessed Trinity, muse not too much thereon, but with devout and obedient faith, meekly and lowly adore and worship.

5. Consider Jesus the Redeemer and Husband of thy soul, and walk with him as becomes a chaste spouse, with reverence and lowly shamefulness, obedience, and submission.

6. Then turn to the deep, profound consideration of thyself, thine own nothingness, and thy extreme defilement and pollution, thy natural aversion from God, and that thou must, by conversion to Him again, and union with Him, be made happy.

7. Consider thyself and all creatures as nothing, in comparison of thy Lord; that so thou mayest not only be content, but desirous to be unknown, or being known, to be contemned and despised of all men, yet without thy faults or deservings, as much as thou canst.

8. Pray: " O God infuse into my heart Thy heavenly light and " blessed charity, that I may know and love Thee above all things; " and above all things loath and abhor myself. Grant that I may be " so ravished in the wonder and love of Thee, that I may forget my- " self and all things; feel neither prosperity nor adversity; may not

" fear to suffer all the pains of this world, rather than to be parted and " pulled away from Thee, whose perfections infinitely exceed all " thought and understanding. O! let me find Thee more inwardly " and verily present with me, than I am with myself; and make me " most circumspect how I do use myself in the presence of Thee, my " holy Lord.

" Cause me always to remember how everlasting and constant is " the love Thou bearest towards me, and such a charity and continual " care, as though thou hadst no more creatures in heaven or earth be- " sides me. What am I? A vile worm and filth."

9. Then aspire to a great contrition for thy sins, and hatred of them, an abhorring of thyself for them; then crave pardon in the blood of Jesus Christ; and then offer up thyself, soul and body, an oblation or sacrifice, in and through him; as they did of old, laying wood on the altar, and then burning up all: so this shall be a sacrifice of sweet savour, and very acceptable to God.

10. Offer all that thou hast, to be nothing, to use nothing of all that thou hast about thee and is called thine, but to His honour and glory; and resolve through His grace to use all the powers of thy soul, and every member of thy body, to His service, as formerly thou hast done to sin.

11. Consider the passion of thy Lord, how he was buffeted, scourged, reviled, stretched with nails on the cross, and hung on it three long hours; suffered all the contempt and shame, and all the inconceivable pain of it, for thy sake.

12. Then turn thy heart to Him, humbly saying, " Lord Jesus, " whereas I daily fall, and am ready to sin, vouchsafe me grace as oft " as I shall, to rise again; let me never presume, but always most " meekly and humbly acknowledge my wretchedness and frailty, and " repent, with a firm purpose to amend; and let me not despair " because of my great frailty, but ever trust in Thy most loving mercy " and readiness to forgive."

SECTION II.

1. Thou shalt have much to do in mortifying of thy five senses, which must be all shut up in the crucified humility of Jesus Christ, and be as they were plainly dead.

2. Thou must now learn to have a continual eye inwardly to thy soul and spiritual life, as thou hast used heretofore to have all thy mind and regard to outward pleasure and worldly things.

3. Thou must submit and give thyself up unto the discipline of Jesus, and become his scholar, resigning and compelling thyself altogether to obey him in all things; so that thy willing and nilling thou utterly and perfectly do cast away from thee, and do nothing without his license: at every word thou wilt speak, at every morsel thou wilt eat, at every stirring or moving of every article or member of thy body, thou must ask leave of him in thy heart, and ask thyself whether, having so done, that be according to his will and holy example, and with sincere intention of his glory. Hence,

4. Even the most necessary actions of thy life, though lawful, yet

must thus be offered up with a true intention unto God, in the union of the most holy works, and blessed merits of Christ; saying, "Lord "Jesus, bind up in the merits of thy blessed senses, all my feeling "and sensation, and all my wits and senses, that I never hereafter use "them to any sensuality."

5. Thus labour to come to this union and knitting up of thy senses, in God and thy Lord Jesus, and remain so fast to the cross, that thou never part from it, and still behave thy body and all thy senses as in the presence of thy Lord God, and commit all things to the most trusty providence of thy loving Lord, who will then order all things delectably and sweetly for thee. Reckon all things besides for right nought; and thus mayest thou come unto wonderful illuminations and spiritual influence from the Lord thy God.

6. If, for his love, thou canst crucify, renounce, and forsake perfectly thyself and all things, thou must so crucify thyself to all things, and love and desire God only, with thy care and whole heart, that in this most steadfast and strong knot and union unto the will of God, if He would create hell in thee here, thou mightest be ready to offer thyself, by His grace, for His eternal honour and glory, to suffer it, and that purely for His will and pleasure.

7. Thou must keep thy memory clean and pure, as it were a wedlock chamber, from all strange thoughts, fancies, and imaginations; and it must be trimmed and adorned with holy meditations and virtues of Christ's life and passion, that God may continually and ever rest therein.

A PRAYER.

8. "Lord, instead of knowing Thee, I have sought to know wicked-"ness and sin; and whereas my will and desire were created to love "Thee, I have lost that love, and declined to the creatures. While "my memory ought to be filled with Thee, I have painted it with the "imagery of innumerable fancies, not only of all creatures, but of all "sinful wickedness. Oh! blot out these by Thy blood, and imprint "Thy own blessed image in my soul, blessed Jesus, by that blood "that issued out from Thy most loving heart, when thou hangedst on "the cross. So knit my will to Thy most holy will, that I may have "no other will but Thine, and may be most heartily and fully content "with whatsoever Thou wouldst do to me in this world: yea, if "Thou wilt, so that I hate Thee not, nor sin against Thee, but retain "Thy love, make me suffer the greatest pains."

SECTION III.

Rule. 1. Exercise thyself to the perfect abnegation of all things which may let or impede this union. Mortify in thee every thing that is not of God, nor for God, or which He willeth and loveth not. Resigning and yielding up to the high pleasure of God, all love and affection for transitory things, desire neither to have nor hold them, nor bestow nor give them, but only for the pure love and honour of God. Put away superfluous and unnecessary things, and affect not even things necessary.

2. Mortify all affection to and seeking of thyself, which is so natural to men in all the good they desire, and in all the good they do, and in all the evil they suffer: yea, by the inordinate love of the gifts and graces of God, instead of Himself, they fall into spiritual pride gluttony, and greediness.

3. Mortify all affection to, and delectation in, meat and drink, and vain thoughts and fancies, which, though they proceed not to consent, yet defile the soul, and grieve the Holy Ghost, and do great damage to the spiritual life.

4. Imprint on thy heart the image of Jesus crucified, the impressions of his humility, poverty, mildness, and all his holy virtues: let thy thoughts of him turn into affection, and thy knowledge into love. For the love of God doth most purely work in the mortification of nature: the life of the spirit, purifying the higher powers of the soul, begets the solitariness and departure from all creatures, and the influence and flowing into God.

5. Solitude, silence, and the strict keeping of the heart, are the foundations and grounds of a spiritual life.

6. Do all thy necessary and outward works without any trouble or carefulness of mind, and bear thy mind amidst all always inwardly lifted up and elevated to God, following always more the inward exercise of love, than the outward acts of virtue.

7. To this can no man come, unless he be rid and delivered from all things under God, and be so swallowed up in God, that he can contemn and despise himself and all things; for the pure love of God maketh the spirit pure and simple, and so free, that, without any pain and labour, it can at all times turn and recollect itself in God.

8. Mortify all bitterness of heart towards thy neighbours, and all vain complacency in thyself, all vain glory and desire of esteem, in words and deeds, in gifts and graces. To this thou shalt come by a more clear and perfect knowledge and consideration of thy own vileness, and by knowing God to be the fountain of all grace and goodness.

9. Mortify all affection towards inward, sensible, spiritual delight in grace, and the following devotion with sensible sweetness in the lower faculties or powers of the soul, which are nowise real sanctity and holiness in themselves, but certain gifts of God to help our infirmity.

10. Mortify all curious investigation or search, all speculation and knowledge of unnecessary things, human or divine; for the perfect life of a Christian consisteth not in a high knowledge, but profound meekness, in holy simplicity, and in the ardent love of God; wherein we ought to desire to die to all affection to ourselves and all things below God; yea, to sustain pain and dereliction, that we may be perfectly knit and united to God, and be perfectly swallowed up in Him.

11. Mortify all undue scrupulousness of conscience, and trust in the goodness of God: for our doubting and scruples ofttimes arise from inordinate self-love, and therefore vex us; they do no good, neither work any real amendment in us; they cloud the soul, and darken faith, and cool love; and it is only the stronger beams of these that can dispel them. And the stronger that faith and Divine confidence is in us, and the hotter Divine love is, the soul is so much the

more excited and enabled to all the parts of holiness, to mortifications of passions and lusts, to more patience in adversity, and to more thankfulness in all estates.

12. Mortify all impatience in all pains and troubles, whether from the hands of God or men, all desire of revenge, all resentment of injuries; and by the pure love of God, love thy very persecutors as if they were thy dearest friends.

13. Finally, Mortify thy own will in all things, with full resignation of thyself to suffer all dereliction, outward and inward, all pain, and pressures, and desolations, and that for the pure love of God: for from self-love and self-will spring all sin and all pain.

A PRAYER.

14. "O Jesus, my Saviour! thy blessed humility, impress it on my "heart. Make me most sensible of thy infinite dignity, and of my "own vileness, that I may hate myself as a thing of nought, and be "willing to be despised and trodden upon by all as the vilest mire of "the streets; that I may still retain these words,—I AM NOTHING, I "HAVE NOTHING, I CAN DO NOTHING, AND I DESIRE NOTHING BUT "ONE."

SECTION IV.

1. Never do any thing with propriety and singular affection, being too earnest, or too much given to it; but with continual meekness of heart and mind, lie at the foot of God, and say, "Lord, I desire nothing, "neither in myself, nor in any creature, save only to know and execute "Thy blessed will." Saying alway in thy heart, "Lord, what wouldst "Thou have me to do? Transform my will into Thine: fill full, and "swallow up as it were, my affections with Thy love, and with an in-"satiable desire to honour Thee, and despise myself."

2. If thou aspire to attain to the perfect knitting and union with God, know that it requireth a perfect exspoliation, and denudation, or bare nakedness, and utter forsaking of all sin, yea of all creatures, and of thyself particularly: even that thy mind and understanding, thy affections and desires, thy memory and fancy, be made bare of all things in the world, and all sensual pleasures in them, so as thou wouldst be content that the bread which thou eatest had no more savour than a stone, and yet, for his honour and glory that created bread, thou art pleased that it savoureth well: but yet, from the delectation thou feelest in it, turn thy heart to His praises, and love that made it.

3. The more perfectly thou livest in the abstraction, and departure, and bare nakedness of thy mind from all creatures, the more nakedly and purely shalt thou have the fruition of the Lord thy God, and shalt live the more heavenly and angelical life. Therefore,

4. Labour above all things most exactly to forsake all for Him; and chiefly to forsake and contemn thyself; purely loving Him, and in a manner forgetting thyself and all things, for the vehement burning love of Him: thus thy mind will run so much upon Him, that thou wilt take no heed what is sweet or bitter, neither wilt thou consider time or place, nor mark one person from another, for the wonder and

love of Thy Lord God, and the desire of his blessed will, pleasure, and honour in all things. And whatsoever good thou dost, know and think that God doth it, and not thou.

5. Choose always (to the best of thy skill) what is most to God's honour, and most like unto Christ and his example, and most profitable to thy neighbour, and most against thy own proper will, and least serviceable to thy own praise and exaltation.

6. If thou continue faithful in this spiritual work and travail, God at length, without doubt, will hear thy knocking, and will deliver thee from all thy spiritual trouble, from all the tumults, noise, and incumbrance of cogitations and fancies, and from all earthly affections, which thou canst by no better means put away, than by continual and fervent desire of the love of God.

7. Do not at any time let or hinder His working, by following thine own will; for behold how much thou dost the more perfectly forsake thine own will, and the love of thyself, and of all worldly things, so much the more deeply and safely shalt thou be knit unto God, and increase in His true and pure love.

SECTION V.

1. If thou still above all things seek that union, thou must transfund and pour thy whole will into the high pleasure of God; and whatsoever befals thee, thou must be without murmuring and retraction of heart, accepting it most joyfully for His love whose will and work it is.

2. Let thy great joy and comfort evermore be, to have His pleasure done in thee, though in pains, sickness, persecutions, oppressions, or inward griefs and pressures of heart, coldness or barrenness of mind, darkening of thy will and senses, or any temptations, spiritual or bodily. And,

3. Under any of these, be always wary thou turn not to sinful delights, nor to sensual and carnal pleasures, nor set thy heart on vain things, seeking comfort thereby, nor in any wise be idle, but, always as thou canst, compel and force thyself to some good spiritual exercise or bodily work; and though they be then unsavoury to thee, yet are they not the less, but the more, acceptable to God.

4. Take all afflictions as tokens of God's love to thee, and trials of thy love to Him, and purposes of kindness to enrich thee, and increase more plentifully in thee His blessed gifts and spiritual graces, if thou persevere faithfully unto the end; not leaving off the vehement desire of His love and thy own perfection.

5. Offer up thyself wholly to Him, and fix the point of thy love upon His most blessed increated love; and there let thy soul and heart rest and delight, and be as it were resolved and melted most happily into the blessed Godhead; and then take that as a token, and be assured by it, that God will grant thy lovely and holy desire. Then shalt thou feel in a manner no difference betwixt honour and shame, joy and sorrow; but whatsoever thou perceivest to appertain to the honour of thy Lord, be it ever so hard and unpleasant to thyself, thou wilt heartily embrace it, yea, with all thy might follow and desire it:

yet, when thou wilt think thou hast done what is possible for thee, thou wilt think thou hast done nothing at all, yea, thou shalt be ashamed, and detest thyself, that thou hast so wretchedly and imperfectly served so noble and worthy a Lord; and therefore, thou wilt desire and endeavour every hour to do and suffer greater and more perfect things than hitherto thou hast done, *forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward to those that are before.*

6. If thou hast in any measure attained to love and abide in God, then mayest thou keep the power of thy soul and thy senses, as it were, shut up in God, from gadding out to any worldly thing or vanity, as much as possible, where they have so joyfully a security and safeness. Satiate thy soul in Him, and in all other things still see His blessed presence.

7. Whatsoever befalleth thee, receive it not from the hand of any creature, but from Him alone, and render back all to Him, seeking in all things His pleasure and honour, the purifying and subduing of thyself. What can harm thee, when all must first touch God, within whom thou hast enclosed thyself?

8. When thou perceivest thyself thus knit to God, and thy soul more fast and joined nearer to Him than to thine own body, then shalt thou know His everlasting, and incomprehensible, and ineffable goodness, and the true nobleness of thy soul, that came from Him, and was made to be reunited to Him.

9. If thou wouldst ascend and come up to thy Lord God, thou must climb up by the wounds of His blessed humanity, that remain as it were for that use; and when thou art got up there, thou wouldst rather suffer death than willingly commit any sin.

10. Entering into Jesus, thou castest thyself into an infinite Sea of Goodness, that more easily drowns and happily swallows thee up, than the ocean does a drop of water. Then shalt thou be hid and transformed in Him, and shalt often be as thinking without thought, and knowing without knowledge, and loving without love, comprehended of Him whom thou canst not comprehend.

SECTION VI.

1. Too much desire to please men, mightily prejudgeth the pleasing of God.

2. Too great earnestness and vehemency, and too greedy delight in bodily work and external doings scattereth and loseth the tranquillity and calmness of the mind.

3. Cast all thy care on God, and commit all to His good pleasure: laud, and praise, and applaud Him in all things, small and great. Forsake thy own will, and deliver up thyself freely and cheerfully to the will of God, without reserve or exception, in prosperity and adversity, sweet or sour, to have or to want, to live or to die.

4. Disunite thy heart from all things, and unite it only to God.

5. Remember often, and devoutly, the life and passion, the death and resurrection, of our Saviour Jesus.

6. Descant not on other men's deeds, but consider thine own: forget other men's faults, and remember thine own.

7. Never think highly of thyself, nor despise any other man.

8. Keep silence and retirement as much as thou canst, and through God's grace, they will keep thee from snares and offences.

9. Lift up thy heart often to God, and desire in all things His assistance.

10. Let thy heart be filled and wholly taken up with the love of God, and of thy neighbour; and do all that thou dost, in that sincere charity and love.

The sum is:

1. Remember always the presence of God.
2. Rejoice always in the will of God. And,
3. Direct all to the glory of God.

SECTION VII.

1. Little love, little trust; but a great love brings a great confidence.

2. That is a blessed hope that doth not slacken us in our duty, nor maketh us secure, but increaseth both a cheerful will, and gives greater strength to mortification and all obedience.

3. What needest thou, or why travailest thou about so many things? Think upon one, desire and love one, and thou shalt find great rest. Therefore,

4. Wherever thou be, let this voice of God be still in thine ear: My son, return inwardly to thy heart, abstract thyself from all things, and mind Me only. Thus,

5. With a pure mind in God, clean and bare from the memory of all things, remaining unmoveably in Him, thou shalt think and desire nothing but Him alone; as though there were nothing else in the world but He and thou only together; that all thy faculties and powers being thus re-collected into God, thou mayest become one spirit with Him.

6. Fix thy mind on thy crucified Saviour, and remember continually His great meekness, love, and obedience, His pure chastity, His unspeakable patience, and all the holy virtues of His humanity.

7. Think on His mighty power and infinite goodness; how He created and redeemed thee; how he justifieth thee, and worketh in thee all virtues, graces, and goodness: and thus remember Him, until thy memory turn into love and affection. Therefore,

8. Draw thy mind thus from all creatures, unto a certain silence and rest from the jangling and company of all things below God; and when thou canst come to this, then is thy heart a place meet and ready for thy Lord God to abide in, there to talk with thy soul.

9. True humility gaineth and overcometh God Almighty, and maketh thee also apt and meet to receive all graces and gifts. But alas! who can say that he hath this blessed meekness, it being so hard, so uncertain, so secret and unknown a thing, to forsake and mortify perfectly and exactly thyself, and that most venomous worm of all goodness, vain-glory?

10. Commit all to the high providence of God, and suffer nothing to rest or enter into thy heart, save only God. All things in the earth are too base to take up thy love or care, or to trouble thy noble heart,

thy immortal and heavenly mind. Let them care and sorrow, or rejoice about these things, who are of the world, for whom Christ would not pray.

11. Thou canst not please nor serve two masters at once: thou canst not love divers and contrary things; if, then, thou wouldst know what thou lovest, mark well what thou thinkest most upon. Leave Earth, and have Heaven; leave the world, and have God.

12. All sin and vice springeth from the property of our own will all virtue and perfection cometh and groweth from the mortifying of it, and the resigning of it wholly to the pleasure and will of God.

THE END.

London: Printed by William Clowes, Stamford Street.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries
1 1012 01195 6036